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THEY MADE A PEOPLE



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By

B. PRICE DAVIES

THE BUILDING ESTIMATOR PUBLICATIONS,
WESTERN MAIL & ECHO LTD., ST. MARY STREET,
CARDIFF.

DEDICATION

TO THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER,
ANNE DAVIES

1860—1911

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CARDIFF :
WESTERN MAIL AND ECHO LIMITED

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1947

FOREWORD

THE desire to write this story has been with me for many years, and at long last retirement on account of failing health has given me the opportunity. It is the story of a brave and industrious people who went to the South Wales Valleys in the hey-day of the coal industry.

My chief purpose is to put on record the great spirit of that people and indicate the problems and struggles which had to be faced by the men, women, boys and girls about half a century ago. I have tried to show sincerely and without distortion how they stood up to the challenge of the circumstances in which they lived.

Consequently, my story has taken the form of a narrative of incidents and events rather than that of a novel with a plot. That is why actuality has dictated the sequence of the story which a fully fictional theme would have arranged otherwise.

The period I have taken is from 1901 to 1905 inclusive, but it has been followed backwards in many cases in order to give the traditions and backgrounds of the people. These are supported by authentic historical notes to show the underlying influences in their lives. I have tried to follow them in their industries or holidays and in their sporting, educational or religious moods. Always I have subordinated the fictional or fanciful to the sincere and factual.

My calling is that of an architect, surveyor and engineer, and my life-long training has been connected with buildings and public works. This experience has put me to study a range of knowledge that extends from the details of building construction to the planning of a complete town. Consequently, the technique of such training has inevitably influenced the compilation of this book. I have built up my structure with written words instead of building materials.

In these days of partially destroyed buildings we can easily imagine a fine ruined church with its main features still standing and the moulded stones and rubble of the destroyed portions lying within and around it. To restore that church the architect might make a few changes, but his chief desire would be to reconstruct the building so as to preserve the fine tradition of its

origins. To do this faithfully he would search out the fallen moulded stones for his restoration and would seek out the quarry from whence they came in order to replace the missing portions. In that way he might use new stone, but simply with the desire of bringing the structure to completion and harmony.

Such is my position in writing this story. I have gathered from my own memory and the memories of others ; and from newspapers of the period and from numerous books, I have garnered and sifted in order to obtain authentic records. To bring the story to completion and harmony I have drawn from the quarry of my own mind ; but the imaginative has been subordinated to realism, and kept within the bounds of what was fully possible in the period and place.

As in the process of time, these people recede from a living existence and other conditions prevail, their courage becomes all the greater to me. And it is my fervent wish that their spirit shall not pass entirely to the realm of forgotten things. That is why I have written this book, and I have prayed that my pen should be given a power worthy of so brave a theme.

B Price Davies.

BANGOR.

September, 1947.

CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE OF GORLAN

THE village of the immigrants stood on a broad sloping shelf on the western side of the valley. On the eastern side the mountain rose steeply from the river's edge and there was no shelf; for you could hardly call the little pocket in the mountain-side a building site although the shepherd's white-washed cottage nestled in it. About twenty years previously, and before the immigrants had arrived, it had stood in lonely isolation in that part of the Glamorganshire valleys. Still ranged between it and the river was a series of enclosing walls which made a *sheep-fold*, and from such enclosures this village was given the Welsh term of *Gorlan*, or *The Gorlan* as it was often referred to by its inhabitants and others.

This collection of houses and coal-pits was only one of the very many that were scattered through the Glamorganshire mining valleys. It was as though the mighty hand of Creation had drawn its fingers through the land from north to south and left the valleys as huge furrows for people to dwell in. Along the bottoms of the valleys flowed the turbulent streams, once crystal clear, but now running as rivers of black grime to empty themselves into the yellow waters of the Bristol Channel.

Yet at Gorlan the water still flowed cleanly, for the village lay at the top of the valley, and there were no fouling coal-pits above Gorlan's three pits. In fact, beyond the top pit, the valley was still in its sylvan serenity, and the trout still abounded in the clean and pure waters.

The village stood compactly on the broad shelf of land, and just outside it to the north were the bottom and middle pits. These were arranged side by side, and but for two black structures of pit-winding gear and two tall yellow chimneys, the two pit-heads could be regarded as one.

North-west of the pit-heads a large mound of black slag jutted out from the hill-side, looking like part of a huge dam which would connect the two hill-sides. Northwards, and a mile beyond the village, was the solitary top pit, with its lesser slag mound and its single yellow chimney stack.

Clear of this last source of water pollution was a real dam, which impounded the water from the moorland uplands above it. Here were the filters and waterworks, with a water-bailiff's cottage. Further up the valley and nearer the source of the stream there was another reservoir and another cottage. These were the property of the Water Company which supplied the Gronfa valley below with "water fit for human consumption."

In this remote position the village of Gorlan held its five thousand souls, who were crowded into seven hundred small stone-built

houses with blue slate roofs. Its products were coal, which employed a thousand men ; water, with regular work for only two water-bailiffs ; and mutton, which employed one shepherd, who had several ponies and half-a-dozen dogs to help him in the care of his one thousand sheep.

Coal, water, and mutton—these were the material products of Gorlan ; but its remoteness did not deprive it of a knowledge of the world around, or of the rich spiritual notes that endured throughout its industrious activities. And it is these activities that we wish to discuss.

§

The twentieth century had just begun its fateful career and in the summer of 1901 the people of Gorlan were now remembering to sing "*God save the King*" instead of "*God save the Queen*." For during the very first month of the new century the old queen had died at the age of almost eighty-two years and after reigning for the long term of sixty-four years. To the loyal people of Gorlan she had become an institution of sovereignty, and her death had put them to speak of it in hushed voices and with solemn reverence. To them she was a great queen who was also a mother, while her widowhood was a reminder of a great royal romance. Well, she had lost her beloved Albert forty years before and after only twenty-one years of married life ; so at last she lay beside him in the royal mausoleum at Frogmore.

Now Edward, Prince of Wales for so many years, had ascended the throne in his sixtieth year as Edward the Seventh, and the Gorlan people were looking forward to the coronation celebrations in the following year. They felt that they would never see a queen reigning again on the throne of Britain, especially a queen like Victoria, whose great period rivalled that of the Tudor Elizabeth. In several of those small houses pictures of a royal group hung on the walls. This picture had been very popular a few years previously and just after the young Prince Edward, eldest son of the Prince George and Princess Mary, had been born in 1894. The group consisted of four royal generations, which promised that three kings should follow the queen in their proper succession. The Queen was shown seated with the baby Edward on her lap, while behind her stood her son Edward, Prince of Wales, and his son, Prince George, Duke of York. No, the grey-beards of Gorlan would not see another queen reigning over Britain and its vast empire.

§

On that July day when our story commences, the Boer War was still carried on in a desultory fashion. Gorlan was tremendously patriotic and all victories were celebrated with a great display of flags, which were suspended from the first floor windows of the little cottages. The relief of Ladysmith (February 27th, 1900)

and that of Mafeking (May 17th, 1900) were instances of such celebrations. When General Cronje and four to five thousand Boers surrendered, an excited and jubilant newsboy tore through the streets shouting, "Echo, Express, five thousand Cronjes captured!" Within the houses, pictures of the campaign generals adorned the walls and mantelpieces. Some large-scale pictures, duly framed, also depicted actual battles. Heedless of the fact that all our soldiers were dressed in khaki, the colourful if inaccurate artists had shown them in the blue and red colours of home service!

The boys of the village strove to emulate the patriotism of their elders and strutted about in paper helmets and were armed with wooden swords.

The Boer War had begun in 1898 and was then described as started by the Boers who wished to drive the ubiquitous Britishers into the sea. With the usual British unpreparedness for war, General Sir Redvers Buller had gone to South Africa with an insufficient army. Those who sent him had a lack of appreciation of the tenacious fighting qualities of the Dutch Boers. After the usual early British reverses, Field Marshal Lord Roberts, familiarly known to democratic Gorlan as "Bobs," with Lord Kitchener as Chief of Staff, and a considerable body of fresh troops, had gone out to retrieve British prestige. Under his command and with brilliant strategy the British Army swept on to Pretoria in 1900 and conquered the centralised organisation of the doughty Boers.

Lord Roberts had arrived back in the January of 1901, and received the thanks of a grateful nation. He was awarded many honours and a gift of £100,000. He had taken the "middle cut of the salmon" as it were. Buller had fought a ferocious head and now Kitchener was fighting a very active, if irregular, tail.

The British had lost in lives up to June 6th, 1901, 17,000 men, and Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, was tilted at by the pro-Boer David Lloyd George, who blamed Chamberlain for the war. There were also troubles in China, India and Soudan during the first year of the century. Lloyd George had said in Parliament that Chamberlain spoke of them as though they were "feathers in his cap"; at the rate he was going on, he would soon have the feathered head-dress of a Red Indian chief! Gorlan chuckled over sallies of this nature although they might be against the convictions of the village.

Louis Botha, the formidable Smuts, and the elusive De Wet were fighting with skilful guerilla tactics which were not ended until 1902. It was Botha who captured Winston Churchill on November 15th, 1899, but Britain's future war prime minister escaped on December 11th, and was back with the army on Christmas Eve.

The boys of Gorlan saw the news posters outside the news-agent's shop, and the following is typical:

"Heavy British Loss—17 killed and 20 wounded."

Their manhood saw casualty lists far heavier and the names of many of them, very many, were to figure on those fatal scrolls.

§

Although Gorlan was alert and knowledgeable as to the outer world, that world had but scant cognizance of it or of the very many mining villages like it. Gorlan sent its water supply to adjacent valleys and the excellent mutton of its little mountain sheep went to the English markets; but its coal might reach almost any part of the wide world.

The mining villages sent their unsurpassed "steam coal" by railway trucks to the sea-board of the Bristol Channel and ships of all nations berthed at Swansea, Barry, Penarth, Cardiff, and Newport, in order to take those shining black lumps to feed the furnaces of many lands and very many ships. Consequently, the world knew the coal as "South Wales coal" or it was named by the port from whence it was shipped. The coal did not usually take with it the names of the villages where it was mined. It was silent and inanimate and could not reveal to other lands, or even to other counties, the story of the people who led a brave life in producing this great essential to national wealth.

To the inhabitants of the sea-board towns, they were known as "the people of the valleys." They had emigrated to the El Dorado of "black diamonds" and golden sovereigns from many counties, and especially from those around the coalfield. Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Cardiganshire, Breconshire, Radnorshire and Monmouthshire sent the most lusty and adventurous of their rural stocks and most of them were Welsh-speaking and deeply religious. The adjacent English counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, Devonshire and Cornwall also sent their vigour in the strong stock from their rural acres. Each county sent its idiom, accent and dialect, whether English or Welsh, with them. In this Babel of tongues, they strove to understand each other and interchanged certain idioms, accents and dialects. These they grafted on to the tongue of their native shires until it was eventually difficult to surmise from which county they really came.

The most heartsick, and those who could not stand up to the Spartan strain that the industry demanded, returned to their homely and rural fields after a time; consequently those who remained were of a tough fibre. As time passed, they made their friends in that gathering of many tongues and the *hiraeth* for old friends in the old homes diminished. Yet this was never entirely eradicated from the souls of the emigrants and they remained staunch to their county patriotisms. With their children born to the new surroundings who had not the old homestead pull tugging at their hearts, they settled down in industrial Glamorgan-shire.

And from this flux of immigrants, from this blending of lives and pooling of experiences, Glamorganshire was given a new form of life. Individuals had their own backgrounds and their own traditions, but in this new life, *they made a people*. And what a grand people they were in those first years of the twentieth century when the coal trade was in the ascendant and unemployment, with its spiritual decay of men, but little known.

The mining villages of Glamorganshire might present a dismal and unattractive vista to the casual visitor who passed through them, but in the life of that people, in toil, homes and institutions, there was a high spiritual note ; industry, contempt of idleness, tolerance, compassion, neighbourliness, love and other virtues struggled successfully with much that was evil but human and in that struggle men and women of strong fibre were made ; from the individuals forming the communities a new people had come into existence. They were a brave people and they faced with quiet heroism those mining dangers that brought about sickness and wounds and death. And yet their innate humour spoke of happy hearts as well as of high courage.

So it is not in the casual visit to these mining villages' that we can find the epic story of the people of the coalfield. We must find it in the shops, homes, schools, mines, workshops, engine-rooms, new buildings, churches, chapels, Sunday schools, sports and other activities. We must, therefore, find someone who can tell us all about the life of a mining village of Glamorganshire for the years 1901 to 1905. Nor should we be satisfied with just the life in the village. We must follow the people to the backgrounds, traditions and histories from which they sprang. Such is the ambition behind this story : to give a fair and faithful picture of the locality during that period of five years.

§

We therefore return to Gorlan on that fine July afternoon in 1901. The children were out from school and mostly playing on the otherwise quiet streets until the men came home from work. We want to get our intimate pulsations of the village life from the schools as well as from the industries and institutions and to follow the life of a school-boy about to leave school would suit us very well. We do not require to follow a romantic story of the career of any boy. We are concerned with the inner life of *this people* we wish to describe and the career of the boy can be incidental and entirely subordinate to our theme.

At the next village of Rhyd-y-pant, about two miles down the valley, there was a Higher Grade School with a senior section in it which was described as "the Science School." Some of the Gorlan boys and girls attended that school and they were now on their way home along the rough and dusty white road that connected the two villages. It was Friday and their sense of

freedom from the week's lessons brought them to chatter and laughter as they loitered on their way.

There were two boys missing from that happy throng. One of them, seeking the solitude of the mountain-top, left the party just outside Rhyd-y-pant and scrambled up the steep slopes to the west. His school-chum had stayed behind to do some shopping for his mother at the Rhyd-y-pant Co-operative Stores. The two boys had been three years together at the Infants' School, another five years at the Boys' School and now they were completing two years at the Higher Grade and Science School. Their school records were very good, and the boy passing over the hill-top had been declared the top boy of his forms for several years. His name was David Peter Bowen. This surname rightly suggested that his people hailed from Pembrokeshire. The other boy's name was Derfel Pugh, and here again the surname suggested that his family came from Caernarvonshire. Both boys spoke Welsh and English, and they had been taught a little Latin and French.

David Peter Bowen walked in the lovely solitude of the hill-top. Here he was out of sight of the pits and tips and he wanted to be alone with the soaring larks and his own thwarted ambitions. For his school successes and the encouragements of his teachers had made him look for an academic career with a doctorate as its top note. Those hopes were dashed owing to the poverty of family circumstances and he was shortly to leave school and go to work. He saw the reason of circumstances, as his mother, Naomi Bowen, had outlined them to him. He had no bitterness, but his heart was sore, very sore. Here we meet one of the unusual problems of the people of Gorlan, for as a rule the boys wanted to go down the pits to earn money as soon as they were twelve years of age.

With Derfel Pugh the parents had the problem in reverse. They wanted Derfel to stay on at school but he was insisting on leaving it and going down the pit. He was the eldest of three children, whereas David was the second of six children.

Each boy was going to follow in the footsteps of his father. In that way, David would become a mason and Derfel a collier. Both were thirteen years of age and the youngest in their form.

§.

David came over the brow of the hill to the south-west of Gorlan. His thoughts were still in a disturbed state, so he sat down on a tussock with his old leather school satchel by his side. He looked down on Gorlan with its long rows of houses. The strong sun striking on the village put it into sunshine and shadow. The streets with the fronts of the houses on either side, looked like large channels. Unlike the other villages of Rhyd-y-pant, Dolyderi and Glanybont further down the valley, the pits and tips did not obtrude on the village itself. That breadth of sloping shelf of land accommodated the village compactly, whereas the other

villages had narrower shelves and were obliged to spread on to both sides of the valley. Consequently, the pits came between the two sides of the valley while the slag tips overhung the houses and in some cases acted as their fore-grounds. These tips were generally burning and sent a foul stench through the villages. But in Gorlan, David proudly thought, as he sat on the hillside, things were different and better. There the management had zoned the development of the village to prevent the mix-up of houses, pits and tips.

The approach from the south was by the one road from Rhyd-y-pant and by the single-line railway which had its terminus at Gorlan. The railway station lay to the east of the centre of the village and near the river. The road from Rhyd-y-pant went straight through the village and terminated at the lower pits. To the west a road forked off and went in the direction of the top pit and the reservoir. To the east and crossing the river, a new road climbed up the steep mountain-side; this led to Dare and in that way linked up Gorlan with another valley. The bridge crossing the river adjoined the railway station.

David looked around him and saw that the sheep and their lambs were grazing not far from the village and that they were far more sparse on the hillsides. He knew what this meant. In the morning the buckets of ashes and other refuse would be put out and then the sheep would swarm into the streets in search for the potato peelings which were found in the refuse buckets. They had no compunction in knocking over those buckets to get at their delicacies and the refuse collecting contractor reviled them in fine style. Their depredations did not cease there. At night they would be in the lanes at the backs of the houses, and to get at the green vegetables they would charge and batter down the low garden doors. David smiled as he remembered how the cottagers resisted such attacks by nailing boards studded with nails at the height of a sheep's head.

David looked beyond the village and above the top pit and on the easterly side there arose out of the hill-side a large mound of land. This was Caer Twyn and it was an old earthwork fortification. That was his usual retreat to solitude, for in a rough-hewn niche he could sit in seclusion to his heart's content and read his books.

From where he now sat he could see the back of his own home, for it was an end house in the uppermost bar of the gridiron of streets. One street, like the handle of the gridiron, jutted out from the village and in his direction. At the bottom of this street was a corrugated iron shed and yard which acted as a depot for the mason who repaired the three hundred company houses. David sighed as he thought of it, for it had been suggested that he was to be a labouring boy to that mason in a couple of months or so. He had a great desire to earn money, but his heart grew sore again as he thought of leaving happy school days behind him.

He smiled sadly as he thought how he had got a job as errand-boy with a butcher at a shilling per Saturday, plus a pound of sausages. This was at eight years of age. Since then he had "bettered himself" by being an errand boy to a grocer, and now he was employed by a clothier. Those were days when errand boys were not usually left at the door, but were told to enter the kitchen and deposit their parcels there. In this way David became familiar with the homes of the village. By working on those three hundred houses, his experience of those homes enlarged greatly and he came to know eventually who lived in every one of the seven hundred houses in the village; he could even name all the occupants. He was an observant boy with a very sensitive nature and his memory was good. He could remember the prices of the goods he carried as an errand boy and as we wish to record the domestic economics of those far-off days, David Peter Bowen appears to be a very suitable person for us to follow around.

§

David from his high perch on the hillside had his thoughts disturbed by a commotion and he looked in the direction of the mile-and-a-half length of road between the villages. Almost directly to his right he could see the cemetery. Some infant brothers and sisters of his had been buried there, for although he was one of six living children another six had been buried at Abergwaun (Fishguard) in Pembrokeshire, and in the Gorlan cemetery.

Coming out of the lowermost street of Gorlan he saw the strange sight of a road steam traction engine drawing two high vans. They belonged to an enterprising mineral drinks manufacturer whose depot was at the Maesywerin, which was at the junction of the Gronfa and adjoining valley. The noise of this cavalcade was sufficient to reach David and as it passed the boys and girls sauntering along the road they waved their caps or handkerchiefs and gave it a cheer. He could see the driver of the tractor waving his cap in return.

Then, coming out of the screen of trees around the cemetery, he saw the village brake returning from Rhyd-y-pant with its eight passengers. They were seated facing each other in two lots of four. These were usually customers of the Rhyd-y-pant Co-operative Stores and, sitting beside the driver, David saw his school-chum, Derfel Pugh. The driver was a Gorlan "character," a wag with a good thirst for the alcoholic. He was known as "Billy the Brake," and his appearance attracted attention. He wore a full beard and moustache and his headgear was an old wide-awake hat; his green-black frock coat was in keeping with the hat and both inferred that Billy had paid a profitable call on the parson of Gorlan.

The large-sized cob drawing the brake ambled along. He was often used as a chain horse for delivering coal to the houses of

Gorlan and, like the jarvey, was also well-known for his characteristics. As a chain horse he would be in tandem for pulling the heavy loads of coal along the steep cross streets of Gorlan. He had learnt the knack of swaying back and fore as though he was pulling hard and at the same time not pulling a bit! Gorlan liked to endow its horses with the names of statesmen; the cob's name was "Disraeli," which had been shortened to "Dizzy." Lord Beaconsfield's great antagonist, Gladstone, was also perpetuated in Gorlan by a horse which bore that name and which worked in the pits.

The brake and its occupants passed the tractor with a flourish of greetings and then the tractor passed into the cemetery screen of trees. It was just after this that David saw the oddest of sights. It was a vehicle something like the front part of the brake and it came out of the screen of trees and was travelling in the direction of Gorlan. Two men were seated in it, but strangely enough there was no horse attached to it. David looked and looked again at this phenomenon and identified one of the men as Danny Greenhill, a contractor who supplied the lower pits with stone from his quarry on the mountainside above the pits. The vehicle was, of course, a motor car and the first ever to enter Gorlan.

It was travelling at the fast rate of twelve miles per hour, leaving behind it a trail of dust and fumes, and David saw that it would soon catch up with the ambling brake. He watched the brake and the excitement of the occupants as they looked back on this new-fangled contraption. Derfel was standing up and drawing the jarvey's attention to it. He could even see "Dizzy" waking up as the noise of the motor-car was reaching his now cocked ears. The cob was actually getting frightened and that was saying a lot for a horse like "Dizzy."

As the motor-car neared the brake, the loud sound of a horn was heard, which made "Dizzy" rear a bit. By this time the jarvey was on his feet, whip in hand and glaring back ferociously at the would-be overtaker. His pride and his stubborn courage rose within him, and he kept "Dizzy" and the brake in the middle of the road so that the motor-car could not pass. This resulted in much horn-blowing and shouts from Danny Greenhill, but Billy the Brake was not to be intimidated. In his standing position, he turned back to look at Danny; then while Derfel held his whip for a moment, he expressively stuck his outstretched fingers to his nose. This infuriated Danny who brought his motor-car right to the tail of the brake and threatened to over-run it if Billy would not let him pass. The answer was a disdainful look from Billy, who then retrieved his whip and brought it down sharply on the flanks of the already scared Dizzy."

The result was instantaneous. The brake bounded forward with such rapidity that the occupants were almost deposited in the road. They clutched madly at the seat-rails as Billy made good the initial advantage of speed. With shouts of "Gee-up 'Dizzy' "

from Billy and whoops of delight and derision from the excited Derfel, the brake swayed and bumped over the rough road as it careered on its journey and made its own cloud of dust. The children on the road quickly fled to the adjoining fields and they gazed with stupefaction at the strange sight of the speeding horse and the novel vehicle without horses that followed behind.

David laughed as he watched the proceedings and the last he saw of that race was "Dizzy," brought to a great spanking pace for the first time in his life, racing down the sloping road to Gorlan with the honking motor-car in hot pursuit. The exciting cavalcade disappeared from view into the channel of Gorlan's first street, leaving behind the trail of dust.

In the distance David saw the black figures wending homewards from the pits. That meant it was five o'clock and that he was late. He picked up his school satchel and hurried homewards.

CHAPTER II

THE PAY SATURDAY

DAVID awoke early the following morning, being aroused by his father's knock on the front door, after his return from the night shift. He heard his mother go down to open it and return to dress. Shortly after he heard a muffled roar, followed by the smell of paraffin, and he knew that his father had lit the fire. Although the sticks were dried in the oven overnight, the paraffin meant that Thomas Bowen ran no risk in getting the kettle boiled in quick time.

He heard his mother go down to start her daily ministrations, and the occasional tramp of others returning from the night shift. "It must be about quarter-past six," David thought, and at half-past six the pit hooter would sound. Then a crescendo of hob-nail boots would sound on the pavement beneath his bedroom window, to die down before the hooter sounded again at seven o'clock. That meant that in half-an-hour all the day-shift men would be lowered into the pits.

At a quarter-past seven his brother's alarm clock (price 2s. 9d.) would sound, and then they would both get up. His brother had to catch the half-past eight train for Maesywerin and he, David, would have to be at the clothier's shop at the same time.

He suddenly remembered it was pay Saturday and that meant a sort of fortnightly joyous activity in Gorlan. His father would be bathed and in bed before they got up, and at noon he would get up, dress in his "afternoon clothes," or second best, and go down to the pit-head for his money. Then he would share out to those who worked for him and return with all that was left for his wife.

Thomas Bowen was a strongly-built man of medium height. His eyes were blue, whereas David's, like his mother's, were brown. He wore a moustache as was the custom, and he shaved once a week! That was a performance, his irritations resolving themselves into gashes which were covered with bits of paper to staunch the gory flows. The cost of a hair-cut was threepence and a shave three-half-pence, but Thomas Bowen's impatience and quick temper found the wait at the barber's too much of a trial. Hence he chose the lesser of two evils and bore his monthly visit for a hair-cut with the air of a martyr.

Naomi Bowen had prevailed upon him to leave his beloved Abergwaun and come to the mining valleys when David was only three years of age. But at times he would be *hiraelhus* for the company of his old friends of boyhood days—the life of the old market town, and for happy spells of trout fishing in the several streams around Abergwaun.

Before coming to Gorlan, Thomas Bowen had been very fond of a glass of ale and a chat in the little public-houses of the old town, and also in the round of farmhouses, at which he so often worked. He would sample the home-brewed ale as a connoisseur and his opinion was valued.

But when he got to Gorlan and saw the fearful scenes at the two hotels in the place, he wrote to tell his wife that he had decided to have nothing to do with drink in future. She wrote back in all innocence and told him not to be foolish ; but when she came to Gorlan and saw what her husband had seen, she blessed his decision. This he kept until his death many years after, although his taste was for the sharp and bitter rather than for the sweet and froth of soft drinks.

Almost his only luxury was tobacco, and this meant two ounces of black twist at threepence per ounce per week. This he chewed and spat out with some precision of aim, a skill he had learnt from his own father. Ultimately he gave up this habit as well.

He was hard-working, religiously-minded, quick-tempered, generous, and with a great sense of craftsmanship in his work as a mason. Indeed, he had an insight into the use of labour and materials which was beyond that of the average craftsman, and he was soon made a foreman mason with Mr. James, the builder, after he had been in Gorlan some months. The colliery officials had approached him too and offered him the contract mason work of all the pits, but Naomi Bowen's dread of the pits and their numerous casualties stopped such a venture at the time. It was only about two years since he had taken on the contract work in the top pit. After an open-air life, he did not like the stuffy atmosphere of the pit, nor did he like to sleep by day. But house-building had come to a standstill in Gorlan and he had sacrificed his own desires to the requirements of the family exchequer.

So it was in that way that most parents lived in Gorlan, and how they reared their big families and managed to put by some savings for their old age was not much short of a miracle.

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When David got down to the kitchen, his mother had finished cleaning eight pairs of Sunday boots in readiness for the morrow, and David cleaned the pair he had to wear that day.

If Thomas Bowen was capable of organising building works, Naomi Bowen was just as capable in organising the work in the home. Every child capable of doing something to help was taught to do so ; each knew his or her Saturday morning duties, so that by mid-day the house absolutely shone with cleanliness. Even the street pavement and backyard were watered and brushed vigorously so that the browns and blues of the paving stones were clearly visible. Saturday morning in Gorlan was a period of intensive cleaning and the homes were bright and fitting welcome-places for the golden sovereigns which came along later.

Those bright, yellow, shining sovereigns have passed out long ago, symbolical of what has passed from the Gorlan of the days of my youth. I must check my tears as I remember—I must try to tell the story of its hey-day and its soul-stirring activities—when men went down those pits to hew for coal and more coal so that the wheels of the world could turn. In those days it could be said in truth of many of its inhabitants, both men and women, that :

“ No gold or jewels there are found,
But men with noble souls abound.”

David arrived at the shop promptly at 8.30 a.m., and had to knock for entry. A few minutes later the assistant came, and between them they swept the floor and dusted all the counters and shelves. This was pay-Saturday and additional vigour was wanted for it. The boxes of ties, collars, etc., on the shelves were inspected and put in proper order and replenishments of stocks made.

Then about ten o'clock Derfel Pugh came along and both boys went out with hand-bills which indicated the bargains obtainable at the two shops of D. B. Long and Son (the son was only two years old). These they delivered at every house in the village. Derfel was paid his sixpence and dismissed. David stayed to look after the shop while the assistant hurried home to his dinner. When he returned David went home for his. By this time it was 1.15 p.m. and he met the night-shift men in their afternoon clothes and the women and children of some of the day-shift men bringing back those golden sovereigns and cancelled pay tickets to their homes. The miners would not be out until 2 p.m., and Mr. Meredith, the accountant, would not finish paying out until 3.15 p.m. A very long queue was the rule, for the men of all three pits were paid at one little office on the top of the middle pit. To do this, a week's wages had to be kept in the hands of the coalowners. The rents of the Colliery Company and Club houses were deducted from the wages and when a man entered upon employment, he had to sign an agreement to that effect.

David's father had been for his pay and sat at dinner when David arrived. Immediately a shilling was forthcoming as David's "pay" for the fortnight. This was for part-spending and part-saving, for such was Thomas Bowen's system of teaching his children how to use money.

David returned to the shop. Mr. Jenkins, the assistant, had had a few customers in his absence. He had also put the clothes brush over the 1s. od. and 1s. 6d. caps hanging outside as well as the 25s. od. ready-made suits for men and the 17s. 6d. suits for boys.

Shop assistants were paid 27s. od. or 28s. od. a week when they were fully experienced, and as Joe Jenkins was as yet a bachelor living with his parents he owned an expensive bicycle. It was a Sunbeam worth £15, and David had been enlightened as to its unique oil-bath. Gorlan was paying only about £10 each for its bicycles then, and prices were coming down from year to year.

The village had boasted of only one "penny-farthing" bicycle, but it had several "bone-shakers" with solid tyres about one inch in diameter. They and the cushion tyre bicycles (with stiff tubes about two inches in diameter) had almost given way to the bicycles with pneumatic tyres. Joe Jenkins was proud of the only Sunbeam that Gorlan could boast.

He showed David some small changes he had made in the arrangement of the boxes or other goods on the shelves for rush periods. This orderliness and the detailed knowledge of it were of great help. David had been taught how to approach a waiting customer and ask brightly, "What can I do for you, please?" The use of "Sir" or "Madam" was not popular in democratic Gorlan, and any one using such terms was suspected of "giving himself airs!"

David learnt to pack suits or other articles which the customers bought. These were much easier to pack than the articles of grocery he had learnt to pack at the grocer's. One thing that Mr. Long insisted on in the cause of publicity, the name of "B. D. Long and Son, Clothiers and Outfitters," printed in large letters on the sheets of brown packing paper, must be in the right position on the packed rectangular parcel. When David took such a parcel to a customer's house the name must be outside and in full view of the public!

When Mr. Long opened this second shop, possibly to obtain the good living quarters behind and over the shop, David was there while it was being equipped, for the Christmas holidays were on. No fires were provided in the shops and no seats for the assistants and Joe Jenkins found himself in need of vigorous exercises to keep himself warm. He expressed a wish for a pair of dumb-bells. Now, David's eldest brother, after having seen Sandow at the Cardiff Empire, could see himself with huge muscles if he could only exercise them properly. So he bought a pair of dumb-bells for 1s. 3d. The craze did not last long and his brother gave up his ambition. David's commercial instincts were aroused upon hearing Joe's desire, and with his brother's consent he sold the dumb-bells to Joe and drew a commission on the transaction; Joe's craze did not last long either!

As the afternoon wore on, the customers came to part with their money for goods which were of good quality at low prices. Stiff white collars were in most demand, and although these were of different shapes and sizes the price of each was 5½d. The would-be "masher" would want what was called in Gorlan colloquialism "a choker," and this would have to be from two to two-and-a-half inches high. Joe Jenkins, as a would-be leader of fashion, went one further and asked Mr. Long to get him a collar three inches high. The miners, however, preferred the "turn-down" or "polo" collar which became almost universally popular in the nineteen-forties, but it had to be white. A white collar was a mark of respectability and the popular scarves and mufflers (if

without the white collar) were not considered to be suitable wear for Sunday religious services by the more respectable people in Gorlan. Ties were generally from 5½d. to 1s. 6d. each, and there was a good demand for these.

The cap was the miner's favourite head-gear, but bowlers came next. These were from 2s. 6d. to 5s. od. each. Occasionally, a trilby was sold, and also the stiff felt hat with the flat top. This latter was termed "the half-way hat" (*het hanner ffordd*) to distinguish it from the top-hat which was termed the "all the-way hat" (*het bob cam*). There were only a few of the latter in Gorlan and Joe Jenkins nearly had a fit when a local cobbler came in and ordered one!

The afternoon wore on, and all the colliers had gone home, where they bathed in tubs before their large kitchen fires, even in mid-summer. They fed themselves on the beef-steaks, mutton chops or pork chops which their wives had specially provided and cooked with nice-smelling French onions as a treat for their hard working wage-earners.

There was a lull in business about four o'clock and Joe and David ventured to the door to see what was going on. They had forgotten that it was the annual parade and dinner of the Beechwood Friendly Society.

Here they came down the Gorlan Road, two abreast, in proud procession, and all wearing bush hats as worn by colonial soldiers in the South African War. Mr. Long had secured the order for all these hats and the loyal Beechwooders were now in proud array. The brim of each hat was clipped up on one side, and they saw a lot of wear in the years to come.

It appeared that the acquisition of these hats had provoked much discussion at the club committee meeting. Someone suggested that the hats of the Australian soldiers carried cock-plume feathers and that they should wear the real thing or nothing at all. The additional price for the cock-plumes was exorbitant, and one member asked why pay for what was plentiful in Gorlan, in the tails of its numerous crowing roosters! Here the poultry experts of the club objected. They did not like to see the chanticleers of Gorlan strutting about minus the glory of their plumed appendages!

As Gorlan was tremendously loyal, the khaki hats were given an air of distinction by having the hat-band ribbons in red, white and blue.

Headed by the Gorlan Brass Band in full uniform and trumpeting the stirring strains of the "Men of Harlech," the procession marched with swinging step to the command of an old soldier. They went into the hall of the Gorlan Hotel where roast pork and other viands and drinks in p'nty awaited them. There is no need to state that they did full justice to the fare provided.

Standing in the crowd on the edge of the pavement was a small boy carrying a jug. David was an enthusiastic reader of the stories of "Sherlock Holmes" by Conan Doyle, stories which

appeared in the monthly periodicals of that time. As he looked at the boy he could fancy himself saying, "Quite simple, my dear Watson, the boy is from a poor family ; you can see that from his clothes and the size of the jug. He is now on the way to the milkman to buy a pint of miik, which will cost the twopence which he has just dropped and picked up again."

The boy happened to turn around and saw the figure of Joe Jenkins in the shop doorway. He darted up to him, holding up the jug, and blurted out, "Will this 'old twopenny worth of beer ?" Joe Jenkins brought his forehead, eyes and eye-brows into a ponderous consideration as he looked at the jug, and then relaxed them into a rather waggish look. "Well, my boy," he said with mock importance, "if you'll bring it back to me after you've called at the jug and bottle department of the Gorlan Hotel and let me drink it, I will soon tell you !"

The boy looked at him in disgust and cleared off.

David took a parcel to the terrace facing Gorlan's recreation centre—the tip field. This recreation ground was near the railway station and the bottom pit. In fact it had been made from the first debris of the pit-sinkings and its surface levelled off by the colliery owners to form a playing field.

A cricket match was in progress, the schoolmaster and David's brother being in the Gorlan team. The former was in perspiration and delight, for his thunderous volleys, each preceded by a run of about a dozen paces, had already cost the opponents six wickets. He was encouraged by the cheers of the Gorlan spectators who shouted as each wicket fell, "Good old Dic-Shon Dafydd."

David did not loiter ; he went home to tea and quickly returned to the street at the end of the Gorlan Hotel and adjoining the Square. He loved to visit this spot on a pay-Saturday night, where in winter the paraffin flares flickering in the wind would be casting varying shadows on the faces of the vendors and their attentive crowds.

This time it was a pedlar of medicine who "held the floor," although an ice-cream hand-cart, a chip-potato van and a ballad-singer competed to some extent. The medicine man had just arrived from some distant town and he carried a carpet bag in which his wares were contained, and a box on which he could stand. He wore a sombrero hat with a wide brim. This he doffed and then uncoiled a mop of long tawny hair so that it hung down his back. His tall figure, his leonine head and his somewhat unique dress were something to remember. He attracted attention immediately. He called a small boy to him and after the boy's acquiescence, he stood on the box and lifted the boy and with a strong arm held him aloft. Then in a ringing voice, which attracted all within a hundred yards, he shouted, "Only now a boy—but later a man—yes, my friends, a man with all the sufferings of a man to put up with." The crowd gathered and he lowered the boy, to whom he gave a penny while he still kept talking.

He had come all the way from the wild open spaces of the American prairies to bring to the inhabitants of Gorlan the medicine which the Red American Indians had discovered centuries ago. This medicine had kept the brave warriors of the prairie free of rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, and a host of other ailments. He would be sporting with them and tell them honestly what it was made of. Here he gave long list of ingredients, mostly herbs, including some parts of a rattlesnake, which were obtainable only in America. He was not there to take money from them which they possibly did not like to part with. He was there in the interests of common humanity and the Red American Indians would be delighted to know that he was sharing their centuries-old secrets with their white brothers in Gorlan.

To prove this he would give them a recipe which, although not so good as that of the ingredients of the vast Americas, was really good.

At this point, Jones the fireman brought out a notebook and put on his glasses. Then he pulled out a pencil which he held poised in readiness.

David ever remembered the look on the pedlar's face when he caught sight of Jones, the fireman, all ready to put down the items he began to expound. The pedlar was struggling to keep a straight face, and, trying to avoid looking in Jones' direction, he gave them the full particulars. Dandelions, nettles, certain types of fern, and lots of other things were enumerated as well as the careful method of concocting the brew. (Jones the fireman put it all down.)

By this time it was obvious to the sufferers of rheumatics, etc., that it was a lot easier and certainly more reliable to pay a shilling a bottle for the product of the pedlar's forty years' research on the American prairies.

The carpet bag was opened and a brisk trade followed at 1s. od. per bottle.

David went to see the ballad-seller's rack with its printed ballads. They were mostly in Welsh. One of them had the figure of a black pig and it was indeed the then popular "Song of the Black Pig" ("Cân y Mochyn Du"). David remembered the singing ballad writer who sang and sold his way through Gorlan in 1898 when the great strike was on. They were composed by the ballad-singer for the occasions on which he sold them, and, carrying on with his song, he sold them at a penny a time. The refrain of one was "The Miner's Sliding Scale."

David went back to the shop after this quarter-of-an-hour's entertainment, and he and Joe Jenkins carried on with their duties until 11 p.m. when all the shops closed and the "chuckers-out" in the two hotels shouted "Stop-tap." Another pay-Saturday had come to an end.

CHAPTER III

THE SUNDAY

THE following day was Sunday and the weary workers of the village "rested the seventh day" and most of them "kept it holy." It was on this day that the division of Gorlan became evident, for the inhabitants could be classed into church-goers and non-church-goers. But for all, it offered respite from the week's duties and labours, and a peaceful silence prevailed. There were no calls of hooters and no shunting of coal-trucks ; the pit-head machinery was stopped except for work which could not be carried out on any other day of the week, and necessary work such as feeding the horses.

Men and women who for six days responded, even in weariness, to the calls of the hooter, took the relaxation of a little longer time in bed. Yet by nine o'clock Gorlan was awake, for Sunday had its duties and pleasures, and these must be attended to.

The non-church-goers were generally the non-collar members of the community. They ate their meals, read their periodicals on pigeons, fowls or dogs, or on boxing, visited each other's coops, and surreptitiously ran dog races and cock-fights. The hotels and shops were closed and this helped to give Sunday its sense of peace.

David's mother got up at 8.30 a.m. and the other members followed in due course. They all breakfasted and then they were arrayed in their Sunday best for chapel. Naomi brought out the collars which she had cleaned and ironed (with the old fashioned irons of the period) and got her numerous brood into an appearance of respectability.

Thomas Bowen's shaving wounds of the previous afternoon had healed, but his impatient struggle to get his collar attached to buttons or studs called for Naomi's assistance.

David wore a Norfolk suit with knicker-bockers buckled with bands below the knees. He wore an Eton shaped cap and an Eton white collar, while his black boots shone with that added lustre which Naomi felt was necessary on Sunday.

At 10.15 a.m. they all sallied forth with the exception of the youngest child. The service started at 10.30 a.m., and Thomas Bowen's dictum (which he impressed on his children) was that it was better to be ten minutes too early than to be one minute late.

Gorlan, although a village of only 5,000 inhabitants, boasted five chapels and two churches and these had good congregations. Thomas Bowen and his charges made for the Welsh Baptist Chapel at the lower end of the village—a ten minutes' walk. On the way, numerous greetings were exchanged, and eventually he had the family pew filled—with himself on the aisle side.

The services were prepared entirely for adults, and the children had no special consideration whatever, although they were able to

join in the singing. A portion of the holy scriptures was read, followed by a prayer and then by the sermon. These were interspersed with hymns, announcements, and a collection.

The children responded to the genuine atmosphere of sacredness which pervaded the service, but the sermons (usually not less than half-an-hour in length) were a real trial to their patience and forbearance. They could not fully understand them, in fact the younger ones could not understand them at all. Their only respite came when the preacher gave a story to illustrate a point of his sermon. Fortunately for the children, but to the disgust of the adult sermon-tasters of the congregation of Bethel, the Rev. John Jones interlarded his sermons with a lot of these stories.

The minister and the chapel cleaner were paid smallish stipends, but all others contributed their services free. There was a row of bearded deacons (in the big pew or *séf fawr*), the conductor of the singing, the organist, the secretary and treasurer (both deacons), all of whom were extremely faithful to their duties in the chapel.

These chapels have played a big part in the life of Wales in the past. They brought home to its people that their worship must not be of themselves but of the Spirit of God.

The faith of the church-goers of Gorlan was simple. They believed in an Almighty God whose rule, while not always understood, must be obeyed and accepted in all its consequences. They believed that Jesus Christ, the herald of a greater life for mankind, was the Son of God and was the Redeemer of Sins. They believed in the Holy Ghost, the emotional spirit which came from God and of which every person in the world could share. But this could be acquired only through the belief in Christ and His message to mankind.

The scriptures in those days were read and accepted in their literal sense. It has always been difficult for the West, with its blunt materialistic interpretations, to realise the poetical nature of the expressions of the East. The people of Gorlan could not realise that their readings in translated scriptures were generally gems of refined thought framed in poetical phraseology. To them, if the scriptures said that a whale swallowed Jonah, then this actually must have happened.

The purpose of the story was often hidden from them because of their appreciation of its framework. They were discoverers of the real gems, who had to suffer odium as pioneers generally do. Later we shall refer to one of them whose scholarly interpretations were rejected and scorned at this particular time.

But for all that, men and women, every Sabbath, went to Bethel (*The House of God*) to replenish their souls with the thoughts and emotions of the Spirit of God. It was under its influence that they spent their useful and toilful lives. Their simple faith and worship was such that it could be said of both man and woman :

“Large was his bounty and his soul sincere.”

Thomas Bowen took his family for a walk for an hour after the morning service. This enabled Naomi to clean up and prepare the dinner which was ready by 1.0 p.m. This consisted of roast rib of beef, potatoes and cabbage, followed by a big bowl of rice pudding. It was the sumptuous meal of the week and how David enjoyed it! He ate his pudding slowly in order to get the full benefit of its rich, creamy flavour.

He knew that the rib meant beef-broth in the middle of the week. The rib was 8d. a lb. he knew all the prices of meat, since he had been in the butcher's shop as an errand boy. The bony end had been cut off and salted. This they would have with Pembrokeshire broth (*cawl*), in which there were always potatoes and cabbage and probably either carrots, swedes or turnips as well. Possibly fine large apple dumplings would be boiled with the other ingredients, which, when cut in two, sprinkled with Demerara sugar and miik, would be simply grand.

Naomi Bowen fed her large family well, if on economical lines, and not a scrap of food was wasted.

She left the children to clear and wash up and retired to rest on the bed. If she could not sleep she would read some book, but she rested that sore leg of hers with its open wound from varicose veins, for the sake of Monday with its large family wash.

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The children were all in Sunday School by 2 p.m., and Thomas Bowen took a nap on the sofa in the little parlour.

The Welsh Sunday School is for adults as well as for children, and has been the means for many years of teaching Welsh as well as the Christian religion. The ages of its pupils ranged from three years to over eighty years.

The English Sunday Schools were started in Gloucester City in 1780 by the editor and printer of the *Gloucester Journal*, Robert Raikes, who ranks with the foremost of our social pioneers. He was a middle-aged man of fine appearance and well-dressed, which won him the title of "Buck Raikes." For several years he had been doing noble work among the felons and debtors in the prisons of Gloucester. Possibly this discouraging work brought him to realise that they were originally children and that his time would be better employed with the children of his days.

He belonged to the Church of England and worshipped at the Crypt Church where later he was buried. Raikes' religion resolved itself into real and practical Christian effort and he started his first Sunday School in Sooty Lane (so named because of the chimney sweeps who lived there) off Southgate Street. Sooty Lane has since been obliterated, and Raikes' residence in Southgate Street, where he lived from 1758 to 1801 became a grocer's shop in the twentieth century.

Sunday Schools were established in North Wales by Edward

Williams who had them going in 1786 in Bala, Denbigh, Caernarvon, Pentre, Sarnau, Bangor, and Machynlleth.

Morgan John Rhys went to Gloucester in order to see what Raikes was doing, and between 1785 and 1787 he started a Sunday School movement in South Wales. Tradition states that his first school was in a barn of Graddfa Farm, Glamorganshire—his old home. He took part in the political agitation of the end of the eighteenth century and went to America in 1794.

The day schools of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) and the circulating schools of Griffith Jones, Llanddowror, had been initiated in the early part of the eighteenth century and should not be confused with the Sunday Schools.

The Bethel Sunday School was in two parts. The youngest children were taught in the chapel vestry where collective and class tuition took place. David's eldest brother was teaching there and it was under the charge of Charles James, who on account of his love of music was nick-named Charlie Cantwr.

The remainder of the Sunday School was distributed in classes (according to age and sex) amongst the pews of the ground floor and large gallery.

David's father had at one time taken a class of boys near one of the doors on the ground floor and his two older boys were in the class. Strict attention was demanded by Thomas Bowen, and he had been known to throw out three of his pupils through the door nearby. This was for inattention, coupled with some other grievous fault, and the combination of faults was too great a strain on the teacher's fearfully short temper. The culprits were very sporting. They came to him later and apologised for their behaviour.

Since Thomas Bowen had gone on night shift, he had given up the class and it was merged in another class.

So David was in a class of boys of his own age and some older. Their regular teacher did not turn up, so the men's class had to provide a teacher. The boys told the Superintendent to try to get John Price and he came.

They read through a chapter in the New Testament (which referred to the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah), each one reading a verse in turn, and their Welsh pronunciation was corrected by the teacher as the necessity arose. Then John Price explained the lesson and to the great joy of his class found himself with about ten minutes to spare. Their demand was unanimous—“*Stori aes, Mr. Price.*”

The “*stori aes*,” at which John Price was an adept, was usually a story made up, using local events or themes in the process. Sometimes it was entirely original and wildly fantastical, and at other times it grafted new ideas on to an existing story. This was why the boys wanted John Price as their teacher!

“Well, boys,” commenced John Price, “we've been reading a reference to Sodom and Gomorrah, and these, in the time of

Abraham, were two of the several cities of the plain of the valley of Jordan. Lot, Abraham's nephew, went to live there just like most of us have come up from the country to live in Gorlan. Now I suppose there were 'hot hells' (hotels) in these old cities like there are here in Gorlan, so after warning them of their wickedness, God destroyed all the cities of the plain. The destruction was simply terrible. He rained fire and brimstone on them, but Lot and his family were saved—except, of course, his wife. She turned to look back after being warned not to do so, and was turned into a pillar of salt. She has proved to be most useful" (this facetiously) "in providing children with a very short verse for recitation in the Bible—'Remember Lot's wife.'

"Well, now, that is a story from the Bible, and not a 'stori aes,' which is what you want from me—wasting both my time and your own !

"Well, down in the village in the country where I come from, a man and his family lived in a very small isolated thatched cottage which caught fire one night and was burned to the ground. The whole family escaped in the nick of time, but the man was fearfully scared and his salvation made a tremendous impression on his mind. After that, if someone went to relate some remarkable incident to him, he would chime in and say, 'Ah ! but what is that to my own experience ?—my house catching fire at night and the great flames blazing and the house crackling and falling—and I and my family saved !'" "Was it a big family ?" asked one of the boys, but the others, wrapt in John Price's "stori aes," turned on him and told him not to interrupt. The story-teller continued, but glad of the respite to build up his story.

"The man died and went to heaven. Peter let him in and showed him the wonderful scenes of heaven. But the man's old habit persisted and he chimed in, 'Ah ! but what is that to my own experience ?—my house catching fire at night and the house crackling and falling, and I and my family saved !'

"As soon as he finished, someone behind him said 'Tut-tut !' He turned to see a small old man following them around.

"Peter took him further and showed him something else, and again came this man's song, 'Ah ! but what is that ? etc.' Once again he heard the old man's 'Tut-tut !' and he turned and glared at their follower.

"Going further along, with Peter as guide, again he forgot himself when shown some new wonder and once again he heard the old man's 'Tut-tut !'

"This third 'Tut-tut !' was too much for him, so he turned on Peter and asked with some temper—"Who is this man who is saying 'Tut-tut !' all the time. If he'd had my experience and seen my house on fire and big flames blazing and the house crackling and falling and I and my family being saved, he wouldn't say 'Tut-tut !' Say, Peter, who is he ?"

"Peter turned to look at the little old man, and said, 'Him ! Oh ! his name is Lot.'"

The boys laughed so heartily that the whole school turned to look their way, and the superintendent rang the bell in order to bring the Sunday School to a close. Before they left at 3.30 p.m. all information was given for the annual Sunday Schools' treat of the following afternoon.

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Tea for the Bowen family on a Sunday called for something more than the usual bread, butter, cheese or jam. For many years, Naomi, like a rich Welsh coal-owner near Maesywerin, did not allow bread, butter and cheese, or bread, butter and jam to be eaten together. It was bread with either butter, cheese or jam, but one only with the bread. She was fully justified, for her delicious brown bread and palatable butter were really good food. Later, many years after this, the value of just bread and real butter was a treat that was appreciated. But that was caused by a scarcity of butter, and this scarcity did not exist with the Bowen family, while a little cask of Pembrokeshire butter existed in the pantry. (They were termed pantries in those days and not larders.)

To-day was Sunday and there was the *teisen blat* which Naomi had managed to make during her busy morning's work. This was made on an ordinary dinner plate and consisted of two layers of pastry with sliced fruit between them. This was delicious, and, as it was cut into eight pieces, there was no second helping.

No sooner was tea over but an unexpected caller turned in. This was Charles James, the Chapel Vestry Sunday School superintendent. Naomi gave him a very pleasant welcome. A worker herself she appreciated Charlie's work with all those children in the Vestry. He had come on chapel matters.

Before we let him tell his story, a word about Nonconformist church organisation may not be amiss.

The executive committee of a church was the diaconate, about ten in number. When the number was depleted, it was customary to elect seven new deacons in a batch as described in the records of the very earliest Christian churches in the Acts of the Apostles.

They were voted for by ballot and each elected deacon should have two-thirds of the number of votes recorded. This majority rule was relaxed on occasions and the deacons elected by the greatest number of votes. It was (and is) a truly democratic method and the members elected were men of sound reputations who gave good service to the church.

The pastor was the chairman of all the meetings, and, in his absence, the senior deacon acted in his place. Their decisions, like those of the church, were by majority vote. The deacons met after service each Sunday morning to discuss matters of church administration and submitted all important matters to the

church for ratification in the after-meeting service on Sunday evening.

The Secretary and Treasurer, also deacons, found themselves with quite a lot to do, but their services were valued and efficient. All the churches of a denomination came under the centralised control of the Union of Churches, but its domination was not in any way severe.

Charles James, who was about thirty years of age, broached his subject. "Well, Thomas and Naomi Bowen, I've come to tell you what's happened about our monthly collections. As you know only too well, the method of making these collections is becoming more and more odious to many of the members of the church. The collection box is taken around in the second meeting of the evening services once a month and each sum is recorded by the collecting deacon calling it out, and the secretary and treasurer recording the entries in the church books in the big seat. Now, many of us feel that it's not the proper way to do it and a sheer waste of the congregation's time. Some of us asked the diaconate to adopt a better method and they dealt with it this morning. Well, to cut a long story short, they decided to stick to the existing method. Consequently, we propose raising the matter in the second meeting to-night, and I've come along to know what method you two adopt with your contributions."

"Well, Charles," replied Thomas Bowen, "You know very well that my wife and I are rebels to this old system of collection for many years. When the pastor states that the collection will next take place, my wife and I, together with the children, immediately depart, which makes no small commotion I'm afraid. But we'll have made our contribution in small envelopes—the usual little pay packets—and put our names on them."

"Yes," chimed in Naomi, "but never once have those contributions been acknowledged in the printed annual report of the church. Our names are there and blanks against them. We don't care, however; we're the only members doing it, but we're acting according to our consciences."

Thomas Bowen nodded his head vigorously in assent, and Charles James expressed his appreciation.

"Will you show me those envelopes?" said Charles, "for we colliers don't get them when we are paid. Thank you, Naomi Bowen, the very thing."

"Well, I'm going to speak to-night and I want all the support I can get, in order to put a stop to the old-fashioned collection that now exists. Why should the whole congregation know what's really the private voluntary concern of the member?"

After hearing this, and now appreciating the pioneer courage of his parents, David felt tense when the second meeting (*y gyfeillach* or *seiat*) took place. The non-member adults were not welcomed to these meetings until they had sought membership of their own free will and subsequently elected as members.

The pastor nodded to the senior deacon, who got on his feet. Solomon Hughes was a very fine old man with the customary beard. He spoke slowly, clearly and held his hearers. He was the spokesman for the local miners' branch when something (usually unpalatable) had to be told to the pits management. He briefly reviewed the decision of the diaconate about the collection and moved a resolution to stick to the old method. This was ably seconded by another deacon.

Then Charles James got up in the gallery, and out of sight to most of the floor congregation, and asked if he should speak from the big seat. To this the pastor readily assented. He did not relish hearing the subscriptions that made up his stipend being called out each month, nor the receiving of that stipend afterwards in what was largely small coinage!

Charles James stated his case rather jerkily, but very earnestly. He enlarged on what he had told the Bowens and showed the small white envelope. He advocated that each member should be given a serial number and that the envelopes be given out in sets for the year with the serial numbers of the respective members printed on each set. The church books could be numbered accordingly and should prove to be less work for the secretary and treasurer. He finished up by moving an amendment that for the next financial year and afterwards this method of using envelopes be adopted in place of the existing method.

The grocer sitting in front of the Bowens' pew seconded rather warmly, contending that the existing method was quite unbusiness-like. Mr. Meredith, the accountant of the pits, also got up from the centre of the floor under the gallery and supported the amendment. His opinion carried weight and a murmur of appreciation went around as he sat down.

The amendment was put to the vote and the overwhelming show of hands indicated that progress had won.

David was thrilled with excitement as the discussion took place. He felt that it was somehow centred on the Bowen family, and when the cause was won he felt that exultation which comes from winning a fight.

The Bowens were very happy going home that night and their friends, Nemiah John and his wife, invited Thomas and Naomi to their house with the air of giving salutation to the victors!

Margaret John had a tremendous regard for Naomi. The latter had helped her when she had come up from Abergwaun to live in Gorlan. Naomi's help was always to be counted on. She insisted on giving the Bowens supper, with cold meat and salad. In a while, the subject of David's career cropped up and was fully discussed.

It was the miners' holiday the following day, and Nemiah would spend the morning in the open air beyond the pits, reading a book and sunning himself, as he was wont to do.

So when the Bowens reached home, David was told that Nemiah

had a nest to show him near the bottom reservoir. David, who loved to roam the valley and mountains, was only too pleased, and he wondered what sort of bird had nested at such a spot. Thrushes, blackbirds, chaffinches, hedge-sparrows, tits and several other birds did not nest higher up the valley than the cemetery which lay between Rhyd-y-pant and Gorlan. Nor was there the variety of trees and bushes available for nesting above this point. In fact, Gorlan was considered to be the second-coldest place among the mining valleys, but it was one of the cleanest and most healthy.

CHAPTER IV

THE MINERS' HOLIDAY

MONDAY morning presented all the glory of a Summer's day. It was the miner's holiday ; but for the jarring note of the open public-house, it was as peaceful as the Sunday.

The miners were holding a special meeting in Maesywerin to which all checkweighers, union officials and delegates of the recently formed South Wales Miners Federation, were obliged to go. Mr. William Abraham, Member of Parliament of the district, popularly known as "Mabon," was to address the meeting. They would discuss the implications of Hicks-Beach's Coal Tax of a shilling per ton on exported coal, the minimum wage, the sliding scale, and the eight-hour day, for those were the important subjects of coal-mining labour in those days.

David, who was the second of the surviving children, cleaned his Sunday boots for the afternoon's parade and tea of the Sunday Schools, as well as his every-day boots, and those of his brother and the younger children.

About ten o'clock he sallied out in the glorious morning sunshine and made his way to keep his rendezvous with Nemiah John. He passed out of the village, skirted the lower pits which were on his right and the slag tip on the left. Some pieces of slag rolled down the tip although tipping operations were not in progress. This was quite usual, for the settlement of the tip kept it ever on the move. David remembered how he and his father and brother had gathered coal from it during the 1898 strike when coal could not be purchased. The coal they gathered was much better than the poor stuff called "Horning"—half coal, half slag, which the Bowens family bought in those days at 6s. 6d. per ton delivered outside the house. The colliers got real coal for even less money, as the Bowens did, now that Thomas Bowen worked in the pit.

David strode on to the railway line which connected the top pit with the lower pits and stopped at a point where a clear stream passed through the culvert under the line to join the river. He went down to inspect and saw baby trout darting about in it. Often had he caught them and kept them in jars like goldfish, but they did not live long when taken away from this ever-flowing crystal water.

Then he went to the other and upstream side of the culvert where the water flowed through a small grassy pond. A spell-bound effect of beauty took him as he saw swimming in the sunlit water, two trout, each about six inches long. How beautiful they were with their curved shapes, their spotted skins and their changing colours and sheens as they moved in the sunshine and shadow ! They moved out of sight and David lingered to note where he

had found a tit-lark's nest in the grass bushes nearby. That was a red-letter day for him, for in the nest of brown-marked eggs was a larger cuckoo's egg of similar colours.

He walked along past the top pit-head, in the direction of the lower reservoir. He began to hear the familiar baritone voice of Tom Pond, the water-bailiff, and then saw him at his duties amongst the water filter beds. From the cottage nearby came the soprano voice of Mary Pond, his wife, as in unison they sang some duet with which David was not familiar. He had not heard Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" until then. Tom Pond gave a hail as he saw David, for Tom had worked with David's father and Thomas Bowen had given Tom a warm recommendation to obtain the safe employment on which he was engaged. Tom had worked on the rough piece of mountain land given him for a garden and he grew wonderful flowers and vegetables. The altitude prevented him growing fruit trees and bushes and above this point not even a hardy oak was to be seen.

David returned the hail and shouted—"Have you any eggs for my mother?" Tom signalled an affirmative and David crossed up to the top of the reservoir dam where Nemiah John was reading a book.

Nemiah (which was the popular abbreviation of the more cumbersome if more correct form of "Nehemiah"), was a collier who had received some insight into learning before joining the crowds that daily entered the coal-pits. He came from the same district as Thomas and Naomi Bowen, and as the emigrants of same districts naturally drifted together, he had lodged with them until he obtained a house for himself and his family.

Nemiah John was rather below medium height and fairly thick-set. He had an intelligent face and was tidily dressed. Even the cap he wore, as did most colliers, was in proper position and he wore a collar and tie. His brown eyes were fine and steady in their gaze.

"Halloo! partner lodger," said Nemiah, this being his frequent allusion to his lodging with the Bowens when he and David had slept together. "I've scared the bird off the nest so we must wait 'til it returns. It's a bird you haven't seen before, I feel sure, and I want you to see the bird more than the nest. Come and sit here opposite me. Nests and books are both sure attractions for you, David; and what's that book I see in your coat pocket?"

David drew it out. "'Round the World in Eighty Days,' by Jules Verne," he replied, "and I've nearly finished it."

"What do you think of Phileas Fogg, its hero, David?"

"I like him," was the reply, "and it's too bad that Detective Fix is hindering him in his attempt to go around the whole world in eighty days."

"Yes," said Nemiah thoughtfully, "that's life—to meet with obstructions and to overcome them, or to be overcome by them."

It takes a good man to win David, but it takes a better man to lose ; that is, to lose cheerfully after he's done his level best to win. When Phileas Fogg thought that he'd lost and realised how Detective Fix had caused him to lose, he was very human and he up-fist and with a single blow knocked Fix down. That, of course, was very natural, but hitting Fix down didn't help him to win, and I believe that to be the weakest moment of Phileas Fogg's great journey. It was the point when his philosophy and moral courage proved to be inadequate. But there, you read the end of the book for yourself."

David changed the subject but his mind was really engaged with that bird's nest he had heard about and he was by now very curious.

"What's the book you're reading, Nemiah ?" he asked.

Nemiah replied, as he handed his little volume with the care of a book-lover, "This is one of those little classic volumes sold at threepence each if with paper covers, and sixpence each if bound in stiff covers. This is a sixpenny copy and it is 'The Memorable Thoughts of Socrates,' by Xenophon, translated into English by Edward Bysshe and published in 1889."

"And who was Socrates ?" asked David.

"He was a great Greek philosopher who was born in 470 B.C. and who died in 399 B.C. Like Christ we get his sayings from his disciples and like Christ he was killed by his generation. Such is the fate of great pioneer souls, the world around them is too small to appreciate their value. Well, now, that's heavy going ; while we're waiting for that bird, what would you like me to talk about ? I hear that you're to leave school shortly. Shall we talk about your career ?"

David flushed as this sore subject cropped up and he did not wish to discuss it with anyone, not even Nemiah John. His thoughts turned to the hints that his mother had often let fall about Nemiah's career having been thwarted as well. So he asked his friend to tell him about it, and Nemiah, quick to realise the boy's pain and that in the story of his (Nemiah's) career, the boy might find solace, nodded his head and started on his story.

"My people kept a small farm outside Abergwaun and I was apprenticed to a weaver whose mill-stream was drawn from the river Gwaun. It was there I met your father as he came along to catch trout in the river and the mill-stream. It was he who taught me how to catch them by hand.

"Well, like Peter of old, I felt à call to be 'a fisher of men' and to become a preacher of the great gospel of Christ, so I left the weaving looms with all the blessings and kind wishes of my old master, even with a good gift of cloth to make me two suits.

"Like many young men in South Wales who hear the call of another Master, I went to the Gwynfryn School at Rhydaman with Watkyn Wyn, the poet. My parents were glad of my decision and they scraped and scraped to keep me there. In fact," here Nemiah's face became very sad, "my poor old father scraped

himself into the grave, for he died after I had been at Gwynfryn for a year.

"I was, like you, the second of six children, and my eldest brother was married. So at twenty-one years of age I had to turn my back on Gwynfryn School and dear old Watkyn Wyn, my fellow students and the library of books, and take my father's place on the farm."

Nemiah's face became wistful as the memories of what he had left came upon him. He pulled himself together with an effort and continued.

"I kept the home together until there was need to make place for my brothers on the farm and then came away here to Gorlan because your father and mother were here. The yellow tin trunk I took to Rhydaman was now useful again and with this luggage I arrived here. You'll remember how I worked on the buildings with your father during the time I stayed with you and it was only later that I went down the pit.

"You see, I wanted to earn and save those yellow sovereigns in order to give my mother an easy old age and I sent some home to her. Living with your parents was cheap. Your kind, hospitable mother charged me only three shillings a week for my lodgings, and another sixpence for tea and potatoes, while she did all my washing for nothing. My food cost me five shillings a week and every sovereign I was able to put by I called a 'prisoner.'

"Anyway, after a couple of years, my poor old mother died, and with all my brothers and sisters started on their careers, I felt that Marged and I shouldn't wait longer, so we got married and had a home of our own. Now I've the two boys to think of and we're happy here in Gorlan, where I now earn about two pounds a week cutting coal."

David had forgotten the nest by this time, so engrossed was he in listening to Nemiah's story, but he did not then realise that it was similar to that of many other sons of Wales.

"But," said David, "one of your brothers went to Gwynfryn School and later to College at Cardiff and became a minister: Mam said that you helped him to something by depriving yourself."

"Well, David bach," said Nemiah, "the scriptures say that it is more blessed to give than to receive. You should know that when a man gets an urge to go preaching the gospel, it's referred to as 'receiving a call.' Well, my little joke is that I received the call but that John, my brother, answered it."

"But," persisted David, "what about your thwarted ambition to be a preacher and a scholar?"

"Well," was the reply, "that word 'ambition' is something which can be a source of much trouble and even of misery in life. The Gwynfryn School gave me something which no one can take from me. It opened the door of my mind to the classic literature in both English and Welsh, and here"—holding up his little

volume—"I get the wealth of thought passed on to me through the sieves of the centuries for a paltry sixpence. It is this joy I want you to possess, David bach, and to realise the great treasures passed on to us in literature."

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Nemiah got up and changed the subject.

"But come, we've forgotten that nest—the bird should be back on it by now. Follow me quietly."

Nemiah walked along the wood post-and-rail fence which stood about thirty feet away from the edge of the reservoir and at a certain spot motioned silence, crossed the fence with David at his heels, and silently crept towards an over-hanging tuft within a few feet of the water.

With a fearful chatter a bird darted out of the tuft and David saw that it was a black bird with a white collar under its throat. Its mate, the female, was also creating a commotion, and its colours were less distinct than the male.

Nemiah turned to David with a questioning smile and the latter said, "If it wasn't for that white shirt-front, Nemiah, I'd say that it was a black-bird. But I've not seen it before. What is it?"

"It's a bird that likes to live near fresh water and it is called the 'Ring Ouzel,'" was the reply. "Some people here call it the 'Rock Black-bird.' Come and see the nest."

They both gazed at the nest of eggs in the tuft. David felt them gently. "No good for my egg collection," he said, "they've been sat on too long. They're something like in colouring to the eggs I found in the black-bird's nest in the wood above Rhyd-y-pant last Easter—bluish green with reddish brown spots, but their colours are deeper and the markings are bolder."

Nemiah nodded and they turned away. It was then that they saw darting out of the excavated escarpment of the reservoir, a flash of brilliant blue and chestnut-red. David was intensely thrilled to see this streak of beauty which he knew, from having seen pictures of it, to be a king-fisher.

They went down to the escarpment and saw a hole, at the distant end of which would be the nest. The bird perched on the valve tower which projected from the dam to the deep water of the reservoir and was soon joined by its mate, the latter with a small fish in its beak.

David was well pleased with his morning's exploration and those Rhyd-y-pant boys would know tomorrow of these two wonderful birds assigned to Gorlan. There could be no king-fishers in Rhyd-y-pant for the river was black there and no fish lived in it. Even the occasional sump-pumping of the top Gorlan pit had stopped all trout in the river. The stream where he had seen the trout earlier was a tributary stream from the uplands.

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They made their way back to Tom Pond's cottage, crossing along the reservoir on their way. In doing so, they passed a solitary boat and Nemiah's face became wistful as he looked at it. "Reminds me of dear old Abergwaun and of fishing with your father and grandfather, David bach," he said.

Above the water bailiff's cottage towered the mound of Caer Twyn, and the cottage was only a short space away from the sidings and workings of the top pit. On that space and on the side of the river was a row of deserted huts in a dilapidated condition. After greetings to Tom Pond who awaited their arrival, Nemiah nodded in the direction of the buildings and said, "If those huts could only speak, Tom, they'd tell many a story about the life the navvies had while building these water-works."

"Aye, you're right there, Nemiah" was the smiling reply. "Twas a wild life an' all. We'd a rough crowd 'round here when the top reservoir was built, an' that seems only a couple o' year ago." Tom drew his hand over his beard as he gazed at the old huts, and Nemiah could see that the memories were flooding in upon him.

"What about the police-sergeant's visits here, Tom?" he asked, in order to start him off.

"Oh, aye, he came here rather oft'n then, Nemiah—and not always in his uniform either. I mind when some chap started a bit o' shebeening in those huts, an' the old sergeant got wind on it. So up he comes in disguise, dressed up like a navvy, and after buying the beer, he told 'em who he was. By Moses, he was lucky to come out o'there alive. Plenty o' pluck in the sergeant; he pulled out his police whistle an' truncheon and shouting 'In the queen's name,' laid 'bout him good and proper. Hearing the whistle an' his voice I ran to help him, but he had 'em quiet and sullen-like by the time I got there. Oh, aye, they got summoned and fined alright an' the engineer of the works cleared 'em off."

David's mind went to that time when a one-legged Scotsman garbed in kilt and sporran, the first he had ever seen, kept a lodging house in Gorlan. The lodging house keeper evidently followed the contractor with his gang of navvies. He was a tough-looking customer.

"But there was a very good type of man in those navvies, Tom," said Nemiah.

"There was an' all," was the rejoinder. "They wore proper navvy clothes; moleskin trousers and moleskin westcoats with long velvet back to'm; an' cardigan jackets under the westcoats in winter-time. Then they'd large thick woollen jackets an' proper working caps. Their boots were their greatest care an' I've seen 'em on a Sunday get 'em clean an' dry, an' then grease them. Aye, an' not grease only the tops like we do, but the soles as well. They'd no Sunday clothes like us, but a new working rig-out, an' 'twas a pleasure to look at 'em."

David remembered them walking into Gorlan on a Saturday

afternoon ; they walked unhurriedly and they carried that sense of power such as a good shire horse possesses. There was a quiet dignity about them. With the development of democracy and machinery they have passed out and the world is poorer without them.

While working, steadily and powerfully, they wore leather straps below the knees. These were termed "yorks" and they took the weight of the bottoms of the legs of the trousers ; this gave the knees unfettered play above them. Stuck in one of them would be a neatly carved miniature wooden shovel ; this was for scraping the clay or soil from off the shovels in order to bring those implements to more efficient and less tiring use.

" But the whole gang you had here at that time were not all like that Tom ? "

" By Moses, you're right there an' all, Nemiah. Many on 'em came here to get work so as to be out of the world. I mind one chap with a shifty look what came here one week. He was a big man an' looked a farming chap to me. He could work all right and they put him shifting soil with a barro' up in the new reservoir.

" In a few weeks 'nother chap comes along ; very much like him, but with a straight bold look in his eyes. He looks over every man down here working on the tram-line what took the stuff up to the works and then he goes on up to the reservoir. I was told that he looked over the men there jest the same until he sees the other feller and then goes right up to him. When the first chap sees him he looks scared an' snarls out, ' Wot d'ye want here, Jim ? ' An' the new feller says, ' I've followed ye, Jack, an' it's taken me some time to find ye. I got a little account to settle with ye, Jack, an' ye knows it.' He then comes all the way back here and gets a job up at the reservoir. They were two brothers, Jack being the elder an' when they'd come back here o' nights you could see that there was bad blood 'atween 'em. They never told anyone of their quarrel, but scowled at each other something crool. I told the missus here that there must be a woman in it somewhere, and the funny thing is that they both kept off the drink."

Tom Pond paused and his face became very grim as the climax loomed up in his mind.

" How did it all end, Tom ? " asked Nemiah.

" Well, for that we've to depend on a chap what came back from Gorlan one Saturday night. He was sobering out of drunkenness an' had been fighting in a drunken brawl on the Gorlan Square.

" ' Fight,' he says, ' they don't know anythin' 'bout fighting in that blinkin' village. They should ha' seen that fight atween Jack an' Jim Dickson on the mountain 'bove the reservoir.'

" Bit by bit they got the story out of him. He'd got up on the mountain to rest in the sunshine and gone off to sleep. He was waked by a noise an' seeing without being seen, he alone saw them two brothers in a murderous battle. They fought with no rounds, no rules, no nothing ; fighting upstanding, fighting on

the ground, fighting and bent on killing each other. Jim, when he had breath, was shouting to his brother, ‘I’ll kill ye, Jack ! By Gawd, I’ll kill ye, ye scum. Ye’ve wronged the best gel that trod shoe-leather, an’ I’ll send ye to Hell where ye belong to.’

“They fought until both could hardly stand, an’ they were both all bloody and bruised. Then they fought on the ground, rollin’ over and over in a fearful grapple. All of a sudden, the chap what was watching them saw them go out of sight. He then got on his feet, and still not seein’ ‘em, he went to the spot where he lost ‘em.”

Tom paused, and David, knowing those mountain-tops so well, surmised what had happened. He shuddered. Tom continued :

“ You know that it’s most dangerous to go over these mountains in either darkness or fog. With the mountains settling down into the workings underground an’ in doing so, they split into long dangerous clefts what are very deep. An’ ‘twas into one of them clefts that the brothers fell, both locked together. The watcher could see an’ hear nothing, an’ he ran from there in a terrible fright. He was too frightened to say anything to anybody, and when he found that he had let on about it in drink, he cleared off at once and that’s the last we saw of him. We don’t know the place where it happened, but we do know that both brothers were missing, which was quite usual with the gang we had here.”

Those were days with no state insurance registration, no identity cards, no ration cards, and with a great drift of casual workers around the country. Men could be lost in those days without exciting any comment or search.

Tom Pond was glad to change the subject and he went on to tell them that the lower reservoir which they had just visited had been constructed several years ago and that it contained, when full, twenty million gallons of pure water. The new reservoir, higher up, could hold ten times as much and cost £80,000. His son and his wife lived in the cottage of the new reservoir.

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He then took them to see his garden, of which he was very proud. He pointed out the large heap of manure that lay in a corner of the garden, and agreed with Nemiah that the horses of the top pit contributed to his success.

“ You see, David,” said Nemiah, “ that Tom Pond couldn’t produce that wonderfully coloured row of sweet-smelling sweet-pea flowers nor this more useful row of prize cabbages, if it weren’t for this foul-smelling heap of manure.

“ So you’ll find that out of ugliness or foulness will grow beauty and utility in life—not always—but quite often. Eventually, they’re not reverses after all, but blessings in disguise.

“ I can’t follow all your larning, Nemiah,” said Tom Pond, “ Come into the house ; we’ll give you a cup of tea made with this pure water of Gwaun-y-gronfa, which we take care shan’t be

fouled. In fact, if it was fouled, there'd be fever cases galore in the valley-villages and town below."

Nemiah nodded assent and they went in to the cups of tea prepared by the beaming Mrs. Pond.

While they were drinking it, Tom Pond placed eighteen nice clean brown eggs in a basket (for Nemiah wanted half-a-dozen) and collected the payment of a penny each. He smiled to himself as he remembered Naomi Bowen's stern economics. She never paid more than a penny each. When they were plentiful she would buy at seven eggs for sixpence, but when they were scarce, she would never buy at six eggs for seven pence!

He said to David, "I shall be 'round your way to-morro' inspecting that water-tank behind your street and I'll call at your house for the basket."

Nemiah and David thanked the Ponds for their kindness and hurried homewards to get their meals and to be ready for the Sunday School tea.

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David had his dinner and changed into his Sunday best. He joined part of the procession at Bethel. Soon they merged with the other Sunday Schools in a procession to the bottom street of the village. There was no band, no uniforms, and it was only the Church of England Sunday School that displayed a banner.

When it came for the procession to turn back and form a "U," the Dissenters (Congregationalist) scholars greeted the Bethelites opposite them with cries of "Quack! Quack!" this being their dig at the Baptists, whose ordination of baptisms means complete immersion. The Bethelites quickly responded with "Chick! Chick!" which carried the inference that the Dissenters were afraid of water! All this was done with laughter and good humour, Derfel Pugh in the Dissenter ranks, calling to David in the Baptist ranks and being responded to.

The Gorlan Sunday Schools procession was a long one with all in their Sunday best, the girls generally in white, and most of them sporting nosegays, or "posies" as they were then called. They paraded most of the Gorlan streets and then each contingent went to its own vestry where tea was prepared.

This year Gorlan had reverted to its original custom and had not gone to Barry Island by train for a Sunday School outing. Barry Island with its sands, donkeys, numerous shops, booths and barrows, bathing machines, boats, switch-backs and "figure-eight." And how those children could spend! They tried everything and returned home weary but happy.

Thomas Bowen would take his family around the new Barry Docks and the numerous streets which were then being built, and over-built, as many of its empty houses testified for a long time.

This year the pockets of the Gorlanites would not be emptied, for tea and sports were a lot cheaper than a day at Barry, and

after all, the latter place had no shelter in case of rain in those days.

The Bethel Vestry was arranged with tables and forms, some of the seats being so made that they were easily converted into tables. The beautifully white and figured table-cloths hid such useful conversion. This was the occasion when the more affluent Gorlan women turned out their tea-table equipment. David was soon seated at a table and lost in awe for the beauty of a vase in front of him. In it were beautiful rose-bud blooms of different colours, the curved shapes of the petals entrancing him. He also liked the long variegated grass leaves and maidenhair fern which set off the rose buds. And the fragrance of those roses ! It was simply wonderful. All the tables were decorated in this way, each table-holder vying with those around. The vases, too, were simply gorgeous creations of glass or china which were fit settings for those wonderful flowers.

The tea china was the best sets of the Gorlanites, an occasional tea-pot, being to David's inexperienced mind, of burnished silver. The beauty of it penetrated his soul ; his eyes ranged from table to table, noting the differing china, vases and flowers.

With a pang he remembered that his mother took a table one year and that the poverty of its equipment as compared with the others chilled him. "These other women," he thought, "are the wives and daughters of rich colliers (!), overmen and firemen, and they can afford these beautiful things. When I grow up I'll earn money and I'll have beautiful things like these."

The bustle and the chatter with its deep note of prevailing happiness brought him back to a more pleasant frame of mind. He took his cup of tea and some bread and butter. The tea was nice and hot, with plenty of sugar and milk, as the tea of tea-parties should be. He did not know if any boy would be trying to break the record of Gorlan this year. At the last tea-party in the Bethel Vestry, a schoolmate of his had broken his elder brother's record of the year before by drinking fifteen cups of tea ! When Tom Pond heard of it he said that he noticed his reservoir falling a great deal that day !

There were two kinds of cake—currant and seed slab cake. He took each in turn and in time-honoured custom slipped one piece of each into his clean handkerchief to take home to his mother. This was another object of record-breaking, for later the boys would be stating how many pieces they had surreptitiously removed from the table !

Fully regaled with the tea he went home with the cake, answered his mother's many questions about who held the tables, etc., and hurried down to the tip field where the sports were held.

For a time he watched the children's races, and then he went to the other end of the field opposite the colliery offices, where young men and young women were amusing themselves.

When he got there, a game of blind man's buff was bringing forth shrieks of laughter.

Then they took to "kiss-in-the-ring." They joined hands, forming a ring, in the centre of which six young fellows, including Joe Jenkins, were marooned. As they danced around the members of the ring chanted :

"A farmer had a wooden leg,
His name was Bobby Bingo !

B - I - N - G - O

B - I - N - G - O

B - I - N - G - O

Oh ! His name was Bobby Bingo.

Pick, pick, pick away,

Pick, pick, pick away—

Oh ! His name was Bobby Bingo !

While the last lines were sung, the young swains selected their partners from the ring, Joe Jenkins pretending to be very embarrassed as to his selection.

With the six couples in the centre, the ring went around again with the first part of the song being repeated. The last lines were changed to :

"Kiss, kiss, kiss away (repeated),
His name was Bobby Bingo !"

The young fellows doffed their headgear, mostly bowlers, then kissed their partners chastely on the cheek and joined the ring. The song then started off all over again and the girls selected their partners and the previous process was repeated.

David noticed that courting couples selected each other, which was just as well in view of a tragedy which took place in another village later that year.

An affianced girl was selected by a young fellow who was not her sweetheart. When her turn came she selected her sweetheart who had become jealous of seeing his girl being kissed by another. So he rebuffed her and told her to select the man who had kissed her previously. She was so upset at this that she ran away from the ring and tried to commit suicide.

When the party got tired of this game they changed to the game of "Twos and Threes," which was less personal, but more exciting.

Ultimately they broke off and went away in couples, and who knows how many matrimonial alliances saw their initiation at the Gorlan Sunday School Treat !

CHAPTER V

THE HIGHER GRADE SCHOOL

THE following morning found David, with his leather school satchel containing his lunch and books, slung over his shoulder, calling for Derfel Pugh on his way to Rhyd-y-pant.

Derfel's mother had been a school-teacher, and when David got into their kitchen she opened up an attack.

"What's this silly notion you two boys have got into your heads about leaving school and going to work? You'll both be sorry some day when it is too late!"

Derfel winked at David without his mother knowing and he seemed to be enjoying his mother's tirade. David could not reply—he could not go into details and reveal the family skeletons in front of Mrs. Pugh. He said stubbornly:

"I want to go to work, but Derfel can do as he likes as far as I'm concerned."

Mrs. Pugh tossed her head with a hopeless air and the two boys passed into the morning sunshine and on their two-mile walk to the Rhyd-y-pant Higher Grade and Science School.

The two boys were different in appearance. David was tallish, with oval face, brown hair and brown eyes. Derfel was shorter; more thickset, with a rounder face, black wavy hair and blue eyes.

Talking about the proceedings of the day before and how they would tell Mr. Infant of their decision that day, they soon topped the first gradient, called the Twmpyn (*Tump*) and passed their next landmark—the cemetery, then the buildings for storing the hay of the Rhyd-y-pant colliery farm and called "The Haystacks"; then on to the road bridge crossing the quarry incline of the pits and then almost to Rhyd-y-pant itself. Now they were opposite the burning slag heaps of the collieries.

"Whew!" said Derfel, "the breeze is blowing an awful stench from that old tip this morning. Look at the smoke rising from it, David, and those yellow streaks of sulphur showing where the smoke comes out. The fire must have reached one of the dead pit-horses buried in the tip I should think! Thank goodness, the Gorlan tip isn't burning like this. All the valley from here down has these old burning tips; it can't be healthy for the people who live around them."

"No," said David, "my father praises the management of the Gorlan pits for avoiding this trouble. It's simply a matter of not tipping the ashes from the engine boilers with the slag. In Gorlan the ashes are tipped separately and in that way we get ashes for mortar for building houses. The manure from the pit stables is also tipped separately and is available for gardens and for the allotments between Oak Street and the tip."

"Gorlan is a much cleaner place than these other villages," said Derfel with the warmth of local patriotism. "The river is cleaner to start with and we're able to make lovely bathing ponds in it. Look how black the river is after passing the pits of Rhyd-y-pant!"

"My father said that the Gorlan agent, rather than tip on those allotments, and bring the dust of the tip nearer to the village, decided to tip on top of the old tip, although it has meant a long incline."

"Yes," said David, "the layer of the top tip is now reaching the outer edge of the old tip in one place. Nemiah John pointed it out yesterday as we passed it."

"Well," said Derfel, "my father says it shelters the village from the cold North Wind."

As they continued walking they were joined by some class-mates of Rhyd-y-pant. Their other Gorlan class-mates would soon arrive as well as the Gorlan boys in the other forms.

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The Rhyd-y-pant Higher Grade School was said to be one of the very first of its kind and commenced to function in 1892.

During 1898 it had been remodelled and equipped with good chemistry and physics laboratories as well as a manual instruction room where the boys were taught woodwork. The senior forms were then named the School of Science. These additions were on the ground floor near the boys' entrance, but all the rest of the school was on the first floor. An Infants' School and the girls' entrance took up the remainder of the ground floor.

The schools of the Glamorgan County Council were well built, their stonework reflecting the genuineness of the school construction of that period, when good stone masons were plentiful. The classrooms were large and airy, but three of them were long and had each to accommodate two classes, one at either end of the room.

The school was heated in winter by means of huge stoves which projected into the rooms. These consumed enormous quantities of coal and gave the rooms degrees of warmth which varied according to the stoking operations and the distance of the pupils from them.

In winter the boys of Gorlan, Dolyderi and Glanybont ate their lunches around one of these stoves and warmed their little enamelled jacks of tea or cocoa on it. The girls were similarly grouped around another stove in a distant classroom.

In summer they either ate their lunches dry or drank the tea or cocoa cold, as was the custom of the colliers in the pits. David ate his luncheon dry and then went to the water taps in the cloak-room in order to wash it down.

Over the porch through which David and Derfel entered, was a turret surmounted with the direction arrows of North, South, East and West. Above this was a wind-vane, the direction of

which the Physics class had recorded daily for some time, until it was discovered to be stuck !

When the school had been re-opened after its improvement, new members of staff were appointed, including a physics and chemistry master. He was a young man of much ability, and later became the principal of a college in the North of England. He was a really good teacher and the boys loved those mornings in the laboratories, as well as the woodwork in the adjacent workroom.

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As they passed in, Mr. Prothero, the senior master, hurried past them with unusual importance. He greeted the two boys cheerily as he passed them, and from this they surmised that the Gorlan stock was high.

Mr. Phillip Prothero, familiarly known as "Pip-Pip," was a man of rather less than medium height, slight, but tough and wiry. His whole actions bespoke a tense vitality and he was an athlete in his way. He had very light hair, a rather aquiline nose on which a pair of glasses was saddled, and behind those glasses a pair of keen, sharp grey eyes. He lived at Dolyderi and had been on the Gorlan Boys' School staff some years before ; there he had taught David and Derfel in one of the classes. Consequently, he had an interest in them, especially in David, who had (in Gorlan) been called "Prothero's Pet!"

He was regarded as "a character" in Gorlan, and class-generations of boys in the pits would recount their experiences while in "Pip-Pip's" class. He was a strict disciplinarian, as teachers had to be in the Gronfa Valley in those days, and the cane had to be used as a matter of course. The elder working brother of one of the pupils, who prided himself on the use of his fists, came to the Gorlan school one day to see Phil Prothero and to avenge a caning which his younger brother had received. Phil went to see him in the school entrance hall, and without much ado received a blow from the aggressive visitor. Before the champion realised that a tornado had struck him, he was on the floor, from which he got up and crawled sheepishly out of the door. Phil's stock went up enormously when Gorlan knew about this incident !

He had methods of his own in teaching boys, and although he was short-sighted, his hearing was particularly keen. He would be writing something on the black-board, his face almost on the board, and some boys seeing his back turned would start talking. Without turning his face from the board he would call : "Come out here, so-and-so and so-and-so"—and the culprits knew that he had recognised even their hushed voices.

When David and Derfel moved into his class at the Gorlan School, their first lesson was reading. Phil Prothero would call out to some boy or other : " You, stand up on the form." The amazed boy would do so, feeling entirely guiltless of talking or inattention. Then after a bit, another would be given the same

order until by the end of the lesson, half the class were standing on the seats, including David and Derfel. Then Prothero asked them, "Do you know why you are all standing on the forms?" "No, sir," was the unanimous reply of the aggrieved boys. "Well," he said, "It's for yawning! I don't want any yawning boys in my class: and when you do yawn in other places, have the decency to clap your hands over your cavernous mouths! Yes, you may sit down."

On another occasion he noticed boys spitting in class—spitting being an art practised by their fathers, who generally smoked a shag tobacco which cost them fourpence an ounce. It wanted about fifteen minutes before play-time, so he marched his class out to the playground. Then he selected the boys he had watched spitting and lined them up to the joint of a row of paving stones. The class of boys were in complete mystification as to what was in store for them.

"Now," he said, "I've noticed that there are some really good spitters in this class; it seems to me that they might be the best spitters in the whole school, and I want them to have every fair-play in developing this art. Who knows but that there may be spitting competitions for all the boys' schools in the Gronfa Valley, and that the boys I've selected may not be the winners! Now you see that the rows of paving stones provide long joints which we can use for markings. Each boy shall spit in turn, starting from the left, and I want to see who can spit the farthest."

The whole class was delighted and the competition began, non-spitters egging on their particular friends to greater efforts. The school bell rang for play-time, and the class imagined that the competition was over.

They were wrong. Phil Prothero lined them up in a fresh part of the playground when play-time was over, and they had to start all over again. Then the spitting competition began to lose its charm, and the boys realised that this was another of Phil Prothero's unique methods. There was no spitting in the classroom after that!

§

The whole of the Higher Grade School was assembled in the largest double classroom as soon as it was time to start the school routine. Consequently many of the boys were standing. They observed that Mr. Infant, the headmaster, was not there, and that Mr. Prothero was taking his place. Around him were gathered the staff, four other masters and three mistresses. The whole school was excited, for the scholars all felt that some news was pending. Mr. Prothero addressed them:

"Boys and girls," he said, "You'll observe that Mr. Infant isn't here this morning, nor, indeed, will he be here for the rest of the week. I have good news for you. Mr. Infant has done the almost impossible. Although a married man with children, and the care

of this school, he has studied hard and had the courage to sit the examinations of a University and passed them. This week he's being awarded the degree of a Bachelor of Science."

The staff commenced to clap and all the boys and girls joined in.

"Well," continued Prothero, "I knew that you'd be glad of that welcome piece of news, and I shall write to Mr. Infant to-day and tell him how we all congratulate him on his remarkable achievement.

"As you know, we've held the school examinations a week earlier this year, with the result that we've until mid-day of Thursday of next week before breaking up, so Mr. Infant, who's very pleased with the examination results—the lists of which we shall pin up by lunch-time—wants us to have some relaxations. So we shall avoid the heavier strain of the subjects and cut out home-work altogether."

This was greeted with clapping.

"Then a week next Wednesday afternoon we're going to hold a school sports on the Rhyd-y-pant cricket field, and on the Thursday morning, before we break up, we shall have a little concert here and the presentation of school prizes.

"In connection with the prizes, which will be awarded to the top three of every form, we want the recipients of prizes to stay behind after the classes have gone to their respective classrooms. So I'll ask Mr. Jackson to read out the names of the prize winners."

The prize-winners were told by Mr. Prothero that they were to go to the bookseller near the school and select the books which were to be the prizes. The first boy would get a five shilling book, the second a three-and-sixpenny, and the third a two-and-sixpenny. These would then be got ready for the prize-giving of the following week.

§

Afterwards in life, David regarded this last remnant of his schooldays as the happiest school-days of his life. There were no examinations or homework, and in the relaxation the teachers got a lot nearer to their pupils. There was an air of *camaraderie* about the whole school, and stern discipline gave way to more quiet fun and laughter.

Phil Prothero turned both his English lesson periods to dealing with English and Welsh literature. He explained to the class the intricacies of rhymes, rhythm, poetic feeling, metres, and blank verse. To do this he would either read pieces of poetry himself or put some of the pupils to do so. Generally it was David, whose enunciation he praised, and Gwenfron Morris, whose classic Welsh he appreciated, who were called out to read the selections of poetry. The English poems were almost all taken from a book of verse very popular in those days—"1001 Gems of English Poetry."

The boys loved the "Story of Horatius" by Macaulay. How they could see themselves as Horatius and his two valiant supporters

defending the bridge of Rome against a huge army ! How sporting was Lars Porsena, the leader of the enemy, to send only three of his knights at a time to fight "The Dauntless Three."

"And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array ;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields and flew
To win the narrow way."

Two lots of three of the enemy knights are disposed of.

"Herminius smote down Aruns,
Lartius laid Ocnus low ;
Right to the heart of Lausulus
Horatius sent a blow."

Then nearer home, Macaulay's, fragment about the Spanish Armada's invasion of British seas.

"Attend all ye who list to hear our noble England's praise,
I tell of the thrice famous deeds she wrought in ancient days
When that great fleet invincible against her bore in vain
The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of Spain."

Then Prothero gave them some of Edgar Allan Poe's work—"The Raven" and "The Bell." He showed how Poe could use alliteration in his English verse, but not in the same way as the Welsh do in their *cynghanedd*.

He also told them that the real pioneer of detective thrillers such as "Sherlock Holmes," was Poe, and advised them to read that author's "Tales of Mystery and Adventure."

David learnt "The Raven" off by heart and Prothero said that rhyme and rhythm were probably used in the first place to stimulate memorising before writing became a common practice. He cited the rhyme of "Thirty days hath September," etc., as an example.

David loved the rhythm and the music of the cadences of "The Raven."

"And the silken, sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before."

David seemed to feel these words rolling musically in his mouth and in his ears. Then the last verse :

"And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door ;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on
the floor ;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore !"

Then Prothero went over to Byron—with the "Ocean" out of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage—the last verses.

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll ! "

And the last verse of this poem :

“ Farewell !—a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound that makes us linger ; yet, farewell ! ”

Prothero also took them into the classic blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton to show that poetry did not always find rhyme necessary.

He gave them Welsh poetry as well and put David to recite Islwyn's “ Cymru,” which is very difficult to translate. It compares with Scott's :

“ O Caledonia ! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child !
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires, what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand.”

And he made them read in turn one of the most beautiful lyrical poems in either language, “ Alun Mabon,” by the late station-master of Caersws—John Ceiriog Hughes (1832-1887) whose bardic title was “ Ceiriog.”

Then he brought them back to another popular poem of that time—“ The Charge of the Light Brigade,” by Tennyson.

“ Half a league, half a league
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.”

After some one had read the poem right through, Prothero went on to tell them the circumstances of the blunder that had brought this suicidal charge about and that one of its heroes was Lord Tredegar, who then still lived at the historic family seat of Tredegar Park, near Newport, in the adjoining county of Monmouthshire.

Captain Godfrey Charles Morgan, as he was at the time of the famous charge, was born in 1831 and joined the 18th Lancers (the “ death or glory boys ”) as a cornet at the age of nineteen years. It was on the 25th of October, 1854, in the Crimean War, that he charged with the Light Brigade and came back—one of the very few—unscathed, as well as his noble charger, “ Sir Briggs.” In fact about five hundred men out of the six hundred odd were either killed or wounded, and nearly all the horses in this escapade, which lasted only twenty minutes.

The battle of Inkerman was fought on 5th November, and here again the noble captain and his charger took part and again returned safely. They both came home the following Spring and “ Sir Briggs ” ended his days honourably and peacefully in Tredegar Park.

In the last chapter but one of Wild Wales, George Borrow describes how a fine cavalcade of young ladies on horseback passed him while he was on the way to Newport on 16th November, 1854,

and was told by a road-mender that they were the daughters of Sir Charles Morgan and that their brother was "in the Crim—fighting with the Roosiaid."

Lord Tredegar, the well-beloved, lived to see a fine statue of himself and "Sir Briggs" as they appeared at Balaclava, executed by Sir Goscombe John and erected in Cathays Park, Cardiff. He died in 1913, a patriot devoted to Welsh institutions.

David loved all this literature study and he bore in mind that Nemiah John had told him of the treasures of literature available to him in both languages. As with many other boys and girls in the mining valleys, those English lesson periods in school fostered a love for good literature in David and Derfel. This they never really lost, even in the stress of earning their livelihoods and it certainly helped them in ordinary writing work during their careers. The kind of books on some of the shelves in many of the South Wales colliers homes would surprise the stranger.

§

Mr. Infant appeared the following Monday and, at the first playtime, David and Derfel went up to his desk and told him that they were going to work next term and asked for certificates that they had passed Form IV.

Curiously enough, he did not think of asking them if they wanted to go to work, but took it for granted. He was genuinely upset and gave them a stern lecture on the folly of their decision. He gave them the certificates.

During the day he informed Mr. Prothero, who knew more about Welsh mentality than he did, and who had a word with David. The latter's honesty soon gave him away, and the teacher used a wise benevolence towards him, and gave him some encouragement. Little he knew that during the past week he had opened up a treasure-house to David's avid eyes, and that the boy felt its academic door would be shut for ever on him in a few days' time. But that door was never completely shut on him, and Nemiah John encouraged him to keep it open.

CHAPTER VI

SPORTS AND PRIZE-GIVING

THE Wednesday afternoon of the school sports arrived, and boys and masters were arrayed in white or grey flannels—that is, those who had them, and the girls and mistresses were chiefly in white. The masters used this occasion to sport their old school or college blazers—a few with the colours of school or college thereon. Some of the men and women wore straw hats—afterwards known as “boaters.” These had hat-bands with various colours.

David had borrowed his elder brother’s cricket shirt and football knicks, and, if they were not too good a fit, they were spotlessly clean from the hands of Naomi Bowen. He had a new elastic belt with a snake hood to it for which he had paid the firm of D. B. Long and Son the sum of fourpence.

It was glorious summer weather and David enjoyed the scene. The sports field lay beneath the rising mountain and abutted on a small lake. Trees and bushes hung around the grounds, and birds flitted through them. The grounds were called the “Athletic Grounds” and accommodated cricket, tennis and croquet playing. They little dreamt that thirty-six years later a fine new secondary school would be built on a part of the site.

At one end of the ground was a pavilion and, nearby, tables on trestles with crockery on them. The staff were going to give their pupils a tea. Beyond, lay a green tennis court, and rumour had it that, after sports and tea, the staff were going to play tennis and croquet tournaments amongst themselves.

David watched this happy group of staff members, and a pang came to him as he thought that he was not to enter that world.

It was early and they were obviously waiting for Mr. Infant, who would arrive dead on time, not a minute before or a minute after.

As he watched them, he noticed that Mr. Jackson, who stood tall and burly in his flannels, was rallying Mr. Prothero about something and making motions which inferred that he was a wrestler. Derfel drew up to David and they watched with interest. They knew about old “Pip-Pip,” of Gorlan Boys School days and they had watched some laughing encounters between the teachers in the classrooms there. He had taught the pupil-teachers a thing or two, and had he not struck down Twm Tomas when he came to avenge his brother?

They saw Mr. Prothero take off his glasses and hand them to someone, and the boys knew that he was as blind as a bat without them. Then the two, amidst much laughter, strode on to the adjoining turf.

"Jack and the Giant," said Derfel Pugh as he saw the contrast in size. "I don't suppose old 'Pip-Pip' can see him without those glasses."

Mr. Jackson, apparently catching Mr. Prothero unawares, swung him off his feet, and for a space swung him derisively somewhat like a pendulum. But the victims had his arms free, and the boys could see him passing his hands over his tormentor's shoulders and waist.

The boys turned to each other and grinned. "Gosh!" said Derfel, "he has to feel him because he can't see; but wait until old 'Pip-Pip' gets his feet on the ground."

Mr. Jackson lowered his apparently limp opponent in order to wrestle him to a fall. Then the boys saw Mr. Prothero's arms making some quick movements around his opponent's arms and shoulders, and then, dropping on one knee, hurled Mr. Jackson over his head and laid him full length on the grass.

"Good for old 'Pip-Pip,'" said Derfel, "it wasn't for nothing that he taught those pupil-teachers Ju-Jitsu in Gorlan."

This was a form of wrestling of Japanese origin, and, some years earlier, the monthly periodicals and the boys' papers had been showing how it was done.

Mr. Infant now arrived and the sports commenced.

David was a good runner and he entered for the hundred yards race for the boys of his form. Emlyn James had brought racing pumps with spikes in the soles, but, when he saw that the others were without, he did not use them.

Although David did his utmost to win, Emlyn beat him by several yards. David remembered how Emlyn, a Glanybont boy, had congratulated him on his position in the examinations, and, smothering his annoyance to have lost the first position in the race, he congratulated him.

"Quite the best runner in the class, Emlyn," he said, and in doing that he slowly began an education which was outside his class subjects.

The tea was "scrumptious" and the "lemon squash" for thirsty runners was also much enjoyed. The boys, girls and their teachers had a very happy day, and the sports prizes were to be presented with the school prizes on the following morning.

§

The following morning started with a sense of "end of the year," and the pupils were allowed to read books during the first periods. David thought to himself, "This is my last morning in school," and wondered about that job with the mason his mother had in store for him. She had always insisted "He shan't go down the pit," and he knew her fears about accidents, which were almost daily, and explosions, which were rare.

At eleven o'clock, all the school was gathered in the largest room, all arrayed in their best attire. David thought that the

girls looked fresh and well dressed. They all wore their hair hanging down and clasped half-way with amber (or imitation) clasps.

The staff were gathered, and then Mr. Infant, wearing a new cloak and hood, came in, followed by the Chairman, Clerk and local members of the School Board. The boys and girls stood up when they entered, and sat again when the guests were seated.

Mr. Infant told them that the Chairman had come to distribute the prizes, and called upon the Clerk to introduce him.

The Clerk was very Victorian in appearance, in fact, but for his rounder face, he appeared the embodiment of the pictures of Mr. Gladstone which adorned so many of the miners' homes. He was born at Dinas Cross in Pembrokeshire and was the son of a farmer. At eighteen years of age, he left farming and went to the Abergwaun National School. From there he went to the Bangor Normal College. He was ultra-conscientious in all he did and was later made Director of Education.

In his preliminary remarks he outlined the educational opportunities available to the boys and girls of that day, and of Rhyd-y-pant School in particular. Teachers were required and grants were available for them to become properly certificated.

(The male uncertificated teachers who had got no further than the pupil-teachers' centre got a maximum of £70 a year; those trained in college and certificated, £90 a year if in elementary schools.)

He referred to Mr. Infant's praiseworthy endeavour to bring the advantages of better education within the reach of the district of Rhyd-y-pant, and to bring about, in future, some matriculation passes from the school. But all this was of no avail if the boys and girls of the district did not seize their opportunities. Mr. Infant had informed him that he had pupils who could reach that standard, and deplored the craze that boys had to leave school and go down the pits.

He congratulated Mr. Infant on receiving his university degree of bachelor of science and then introduced the Chairman.

The latter got on his feet. He had not the distinguished presence of the Clerk; he was of medium height and well built. His dark hair was greying and he wore a heavy moustache. His face was full and he carried a quiet homely dignity. He looked what he was, a colliery official.

After thanking Mr. Infant for the honour and pleasure given him that morning he added his congratulations to Mr. Infant to those of the Clerk. Then he went on:

"Well, boys and girls, I want to strike a different note to that of our worthy Clerk. His sermon is always the same, and he and Mr. Infant are to be praised for taking their jobs so seriously. Unless we all do that, then there isn't much shape to things. Most of the Clerk's sons or daughters are either teachers or head-teachers." (The staff repressed a smile for the Clerk had nine children.)

"But we can't all be teachers in schools, nor need we look on education as being solely academic. Mr. Weller, senior, told Mr. Pickwick that he had taken a great deal of pains with Sam's education ; he had left Sam run in the London streets when he was very young and shift for himself." (There was a laugh at this.)

"Now I want to point out to you boys and girls, whether you are prize-winners or not, that much as we Welsh people appreciate education, this old world of ours has much greater necessities.

"First of all there is food—even teachers must have food (laughter), and someone must 'reap and sow and plough and mow' in order that we shall sustain life.

"Then we must have shelter ; houses and schools are built for that purpose. Someone must learn building craft in order to provide them.

"Next we must have warmth and the means to cook our meals. So someone must go down the pits to dig the 'black diamonds' to keep the fires going. Oh yes, even teachers must have the very necessary coal, and boys must go and learn this coal-digging craft, in order that houses and schools shall be heated."

His eyes took on some new fire as he continued :

"Yes, this coal must be got out of the bowels of the earth in order to smelt iron, steel and other metals, to drive railway engines and ships, yes, to drive the wheels of industry all over the world.

"When some of you boys go down the pits, I want you to realise that you are doing something much more than earning your bread and butter. You're doing your fellow human beings a great service.

"There are other industries and my remarks apply to them as well. And that reminds me that we should have other industries in these valleys instead of depending solely on coal. It would broaden our activities, lessen stresses during periods of strikes or coal trade depressions, and it would broaden our view altogether.

"I would like to stress a form of education which the Clerk hasn't mentioned. I mean technical education.

"You boys and girls who are leaving school to earn your livings"—(here he turned for a moment to the Clerk)—"yes, Mr. Clerk, some of these boys and girls have no option but to go to work in order to help the struggles of their family exchequers. I wouldn't disparage or rebuke them, and to me they are silent heroes." (Here Mr. Prothero and a few of the staff clapped, and the former gave David a quick sympathetic glance.)

The Chairman continued :

"I want these boys and girls (some of them I hear of as brilliant scholars), to take their ability into their occupations, whatever they may be. If they become farmers, then they can look to where farming can be improved in the light of modern progress. So with building houses and coal-mining, they can regard their

abilities as God-given gifts for the benefit of, not themselves, but of their fellow-human beings.

"We've examples to quote. Take our dear old Mabon for instance. He started work as a door-boy in the pit at the age of nine. Take our talented musician Dr. Joseph Parry, he started manual work at the same age. Then there is our next Archdruid—Evan Rees—or 'Dyfed' to give him his well-earned bardic title; he went to work at eight years of age. Then we can go to the world of capitalists and find David Davies, Llandinam, railway and docks builder, sinker of pits and goodness knows what; he started work at eleven years of age and became the first Welsh millionaire. All these men came out of the *gwerin* class of Wales—or the common people—if you like, and their courage, perseverance, integrity and hard work benefited thousands and thousands of their fellow-countrymen in various spheres.

"Today, we as a School Board, offer assistance to those who go to manual work. We run evening classes three nights a week in each place for the winter months and charge only a few shillings. Then in centres like Rhyd-y-pant we run technical evening classes in mining, mine surveying, machine drawing, building construction, cookery, needlework, and any other subject if we can get enough to form the classes.

"Well, you must have got tired of listening to me by now, so I will end by congratulating the prize-winners and to wish every boy and girl here success in their occupations, whatever those may be."

He sat down and wiped the perspiration from his brow, and received a very enthusiastic clap. David had received much comfort from his speech.

Then followed songs by the school choir and small parties of boys and girls. They sang the French National Anthem (in French), "All Through the Night," and "Larboard Watch"—the latter being very popular at that time.

During two breaks in the programme, the boys and girls went forward to receive the prizes. The first break was given to school results and the second to sports results. During the former David received "The Life of the Duke of Wellington," and, as a second prize for short distance running, a small pocket wallet.

The programme was concluded. Then came "The Land of My Fathers," in Welsh, followed by "God Save the King."

After that they all filed into the sunshine and David and Emlyn wished each other good-bye and good luck.

Inspired by the Chairman's speech, David held his head high as he passed out of the school gates to face another period in his career.

CHAPTER VII

COAL ! MORE COAL ! AND STILL MORE COAL !

THE following Wednesday morning found Nemiah John and David in the train leaving Gorlan very early. They were on their way to the National Eisteddfod at Merthyr. This was a treat that Nemiah had insisted upon giving David, and his two boys would come along with a party of competitors the following morning. To get to Merthyr from Gorlan by train, they had to go down the valley to Pont Enfys, change there and travel up other valleys to reach their destination. The result was that David saw pit after pit in endless succession, with tips and houses often co-mingled, and the mountain tops struggling to survive in some sort of green. The rivers intertwined with the railway lines, and were generally black. Tributary streams poured down the mountain-sides to join the rivers, and the white cataracts of some of their lengths made a pleasing change to the black grime so evident everywhere.

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The eighteenth century had already started the industrial desecration of Glamorganshire, and shorn its beautiful mountains and valleys of its woods in order to feed voracious furnaces which turned ores into metals. Before that time it was a beautiful shire, with its verdant acres, its woodlands the haunt of the red squirrel and other wild life and the crystal waters of its rivers the home of the lordly salmon and the beautifully speckled trout. The old churches were sparsely distributed and the greystone or white-washed farmhouses and cottages were sprinkled over it. Along the fringe of its South Coast and in its hinterland about forty medieval castles, generally in various stages of hoary ruin, presented ancient and pleasing touches. The large castles of Cardiff and Caerphilly contrasted somewhat with the smaller castles of Castell Coch and Coity. The ruins of old monastic establishments helped the picture and showed that the county had been of considerable importance in the past.

But Man found this beautiful land to be a treasure house of minerals. Firstly, he dug stone to build his houses, and for mortar he burnt its limestone into lime and dug pits for gravel and sand. Later as the beautiful woodlands were shorn away he sought a substitute for that flow into the endless-burning furnaces, and in the outcrops on the mountains he found Coal ! This dirty black stone he found to be better for his purpose than the timber, and he learnt to dig for it. The mandril replaced the felling axe as he went down and down to seek this other fuel. And here, under the shorn crust of his earth, he found other forests from which he

could feed those furnaces. Long, long before, even before Man crawled out of his primeval state, these forests had been stored away as compressed wood and vegetation, and they had blackened in the process.

So the nineteenth century found Man exulting over his new finds—the wonderful coal which lay beneath the fair land of Glamorgan. It was the best in the world ! What was the gold of Australia, Africa and Alaska to compare with this ? You could not keep those furnaces going with shining yellow gold and yet you could always convert the coal into the beautiful yellow sovereigns of the world's best currency. Coal—Gold ! Gold—Coal !!! It was a two-way process of conversion, and this a conversion of beautiful Glamorganshire to one of the greatest industrial areas of the world. There was even romance in this conversion.

The foreign countries of the world came to know that Glamorganshire coal was excellent, so they sent for it. This meant ships to carry it. Ships meant steel and you could not make steel out of the ores without smelting it with coal. It was coal, more coal and still more coal. More pits were sunk by adventurous men, men who were generally successful, but not always. Later in life David met the son of one of these men who had been lured from far-off Sussex to adventure his capital in the valleys. The son had a grim sense of humour. He said "My father sank the Ystrad pits, and the pits returned the compliment !"

The discovery of steam power also called for coal. Man was abandoning the picturesque mechanisms of wind and water ; he had found a stronger and more sure power of applying heat to water and harnessing the product to his new engines. Steam meant heat, and heat meant Coal !

So the nineteenth century Glamorgan drew to itself the immigrants from its neighbouring and other counties. The shires of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland brought a babel of many tongues, for those were days of strong dialects and men from Cornwall and Wiltshire could not understand each other's English. Pembrokeshire and Caernarvonshire provided similar problems in Welsh.

But the main background remained Welsh—even though the Welsh shires also contributed their quota of dialects !

The immigration is to be seen in the population statistics of Glamorganshire :

1801	..	70,879	1881	..	511,433
1831	..	126,612	1891	..	687,218
1851	..	321,849	1901	..	859,931

Even in 1901 new coal pits were being sunk and for another dozen years the output of coal increased.

The immigrants generally left their rural acres because of the extreme poverty resulting from working on the land. To produce

food for the nation meant extreme penury for the workers, and their wages for long hours in all sorts of weather were simply a few shillings per week.

In the rich land of Sussex, the farm labourer's weekly wage during the earlier part of the nineteenth century was only eight shillings while it ranged from thirteen to sixteen shillings during the latter part of that century. Wage problems were even more difficult in the counties with poorer pastures.

A Welsh poet of high standing in his day, Dewi Wyn of Eifion (1784-1841), himself a farmer, describes the farm labourer bringing home his wage to his large family at the end of the week. The two lines are tense with the poignant drama of the situation :

*“ Dod a'i geiniog dan gwynaw—
Rhoi angen un rhwng y naw ! ”*

Translation into English has been described as impossible, but paraphrasing can be attempted :

*“ His pittance he brings with a dolorous sign—
The succour of one, for the famine of nine.”*

These immigrants were virile—they possessed enough strength of will to adventure forth from their native acres, but never did they altogether forget those distant fields. In fact, they took their atmosphere with them, and their staunch loyalty to the shires that gave them birth was something to admire. Wales, many years later, was to groan that her most virile manhood and womanhood were leaving her valleys ; but during the nineteenth century the movement was advantageously “ in reverse.”

Glamorganshire became the crucible in which the human ores of many shires were melted to produce one metal, and that metal had to be strong so that it could endure the great task of providing South Wales coal for the furnaces of the world.

After the immigrants had been in the mining valleys for some time they gradually lost the poignant pull of their native fields. Their return visits became less frequent and we have seen how the Bowen family buried their first dead in Abergwaun and their later dead in Gorlan. For the beloved dead hallow the district they rest in and silently but surely they make ties for the living.

In the mining villages like Gorlan, the men kept loyal to the native shires, and out of this loyalty a great competitive force arose. It was found in industry and it was found in cultural developments such as in the small eisteddfodau. A man felt that he must not let his native county down.

David heard his father relate, when the former was very young, how this county loyalty was exploited to build the workmen's houses in Gorlan. The foundations were laid and then, on a Monday morning, one mason would be placed in each house of the row, and supplied with stone, bricks, mortar and scaffolding. Then the “ slogging ” (as it was termed by the men) began. They would start at 6.30 a.m., get a second breakfast at 8.30 to 9.0 a.m., dinner

at 1.0 to 2.0 p.m., and finish at 6.0 p.m. On Saturdays, they finished at 1.0 p.m. Unless they had lost time, their week was of fifty-six working hours. And it was WORK! The men would toil with all the skill and energy they could muster, and all they could do at 6 p.m. was to crawl home, get their evening meals, and go to bed. The same sort of thing was happening in the mines, each man the defender of his county's honour!

This influx of virile men brought with it the various methods of the districts they came from, and in a sense they pooled their methods in this great competitive struggle. The best of methods were adopted irrespective of where they came from, and this helped production. At the same time the cosmopolitanism of it all helped the mining community to broaden their outlooks and to keep them receptive to better methods. There was no room for conservatism and all this helped to forge the mixture of peoples to form that product known as the "South Walian." He was alert, industrious, ultra-democratic in his views, and with a lively sense of humour. The comedians who visited the large towns of the district used to say that whereas in other provincial districts, their "gags" would fall flat, for their listeners would see them only when the show was over, the South Walians would be laughing before they could say the last words!

Gradually the native fields of the immigrants would become more distant and, as their children were reared in the valleys, their interests would be more and more enshrined in these grimy valleys. They would become more Gorlanite in character as their little houses became their homes and as their new employment and institutions gathered them into the folds. Their old parochialisms gave way to the newer ones, and the newer ones became the stronger.

Bringing the subject of coal into a direct relation with the valleys through which Nemiah John and David passed that morning, the following statistics of coal and coke carried by the then Taff Vale Railway may be of interest :

Year	Tons	Year	Tons
1841	41,669	1863	2,772,011
1842	114,516	1873	4,527,641
1843	152,100	1883	8,614,715
1850	594,222	1893	11,342,905
1853	874,362	1903	16,168,858
1860	2,132,995	1913	19,392,267

The tonnages of 1893, 1903, and 1913 indicate how the phenomenal output of coal was increasing, and while our railway passengers were travelling to Merthyr, there was no serious check on the demand for coal and more coal. It was a world of industry that was rolling on to increased prosperity and even the Boer War made but little impression on it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WELSH NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD, AUGUST, 1901

NEMIAH and David started their journey from the terminus of Gorlan with ample room, but, as they stopped at the many stations, cheerful crowds in Eisteddfod holiday mood, joined the train. They had a job to find seats when they changed at Pont Enfys, and long before the train reached Merthyr it was packed.

Their seats were of bare wood and by no means comfortable, while the wooden divisions between the compartments were only five feet high. This latter feature enabled a great deal of happy chaff and banter to pass from one end of the railway carriage to the other.

Innumerable small eisteddfodau were held throughout Wales during the year, but there was only *one* Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales in the year. Its location varied by being in North Wales and South Wales in alternate years, but its venue changed. This year it was in the old industrial centre of Wales—Merthyr. It had not been held there since 1881 and it was to be held in Bangor in 1902.

Arriving at Merthyr, Nemiah John managed to get some food for himself and David and then they both made way to the Penydaren Park where the eisteddfod pavilion had been erected.

They passed through the turnstiles and entered Penydaren Park which, with its large shady trees, offered a pleasant setting for Wales' chief annual event. Nemiah began to act as guide :

" You see this large temporary building, it's called the eisteddfod pavilion. It's erected and taken down each year, but its size may vary according to the place of the Eisteddfod. The architect for this structure is Roderick of Aberdare and the contractor is Woodhouse of Nottingham. It's 210 feet long and 180 feet wide and it will hold about 11,000 people ; its cost is £1,563. So you see that a lot of gate money goes to pay for the pavilion. Subscribers contribute towards the expenses, and tradesmen and others in each town in which it's held act as guarantors against a loss which might occur. The Eisteddfod is held during the first week of August and its 'gates' are very dependable upon the weather. The curious thing is that the 'gates' are sometimes better in small places—say like Abergwaun—than in larger places like Cardiff.

" For the proper setting of the Eisteddfod, park land around the pavilion is essential. Here the *eisteddfodwyr* meet and talk over their usual topics or enjoy walks in pleasant surroundings."

Nemiah took David around the subsidiary buildings and then they entered the pavilion.

The Eisteddfod had opened its several days' proceedings the day before. Lord Tredegar (our hero of Balaclava) had opened it and presided over the morning session. He then wore a flowing moustache and side whiskers. Mr. Alfred Thomas, M.P. (after-

wards Lord Pontypridd) had presided over the afternoon session.

When they got inside, the Wednesday's afternoon session was about to begin. David looked around him with amazement. This place was even larger—yes, a great deal larger—than Gorlan's largest chapel. He saw a large platform and a tier of seats rising from it. That is just like what Davies, the schoolmaster, arranges for the school concerts—but much larger—thought David. Around the walls were stuck the paper posters with the names of Welsh cultural notables printed on them. Nemiah let him look his fill and helped him to information concerning some of the names. He now said :

"I've a very special reason for coming here today. David, for the chief item of the day is the award of the bardic crown and I'm hoping that an old fellow-student of the Gwynfryn School will win it. He has won several bardic chairs and a gold medal in provincial eisteddfodau, but has failed, so far, to win either the National crown or chair."

"What's this Gwynfryn School" asked David. "Is it for boys and girls?"

"No, not exactly," was the reply, "it's a school for young men who are too old to go to the intermediate schools ; many of them come out of the industries to go there ; it helps them to study and pass examinations in order to go to various colleges. Its principal is Watkyn Wyn, the poet, and he founded it at Ammanford. Since he opened the school twenty-one years ago about four hundred have passed out of it into the professions, mostly teaching and preaching. As I told you before, I was there for a year."

The Eisteddfod competitions commenced—a Welsh recitation, trombone solo, tenor solo, and adjudications on essays submitted dealing with the Welsh coal seams and agriculture. After these came the 'cello solo and the duet of soprano and contralto competitions. These David found to be rather tedious, but the music connoisseurs listened with rapt attention. They passed their judgments and these generally coincided with those of the adjudicators.

There was a stir of excitement as the appointed time for the crowning ceremony drew near. Then the doors of the pavilion were opened and there entered a procession of the members of the Gorsedd. All wore their picturesque robes.

The robed members of the Gorsedd procession were in three colours—green, blue and white, and these denoted the three different orders of the Gorsedd. Those robed in green were ovates who had either passed the first two examinations of the Gorsedd or had been awarded the ovateship for other merit. They were in three classes, and termed "bard ovates," "literateur ovates," or "musician ovates," corresponding respectively to poetry, prose and music.

The Gorsedd members robed in blue had passed the final examinations of their respective classes and were termed "bards," "literateurs" or "musicians."

The white-robed members of the Gorsedd were "druids" and were admitted into this order by a two-thirds vote of the existing druids. The winning of the chair or crown of the National Eisteddfod was an accepted qualification for this order, as well as the publication of a work on literature, music or scholarship, provided that the work was of an accepted national standard. Each druid, who wore a chaplet of laurel leaves, was termed a "chief bard" and wore it by virtue of having won a chair or crown at the National Eisteddfod.

These robes were first worn in 1897 at the National Eisteddfod at Newport and were specially designed by Professor Herkomer.

The Hirlas Horn, a gift from Lord Tredegar, was carried and also the huge Eisteddfod Sword. This latter was indeed the *cledd mawr* with which the Scottish term "claymore" must surely be associated.

The procession was passing on to the platform when David got very excited. As he caught sight of a familiar face in the procession, he said :

"Look, Nemiah ! There's Eos Gorlan."

"Eos" is the Welsh for nightingale and was much used in Gorsedd titles for musicians in those days.

"To be sure," said Nemiah, and he chuckled. "He's not the winding-engineman of the middle pit today ! Someone else must be doing his eight-hour shift while he's here, unless he gets back to do it tonight. The banksmen say that while the National Eisteddfod is on and the Eos is at his post, they have to go and wake him after a pause for a bit of food. He's a great favourite at the National Eisteddfod for he writes his own songs of topical interest and sings them well to the accompaniment of the harp. We may see him doing it here yet. But see, they are all now in their places, with old Hwfa Môn as the 'gaffer.'"

A striking figure was Hwfa Môn (or the Rev. Rowland Williams), the Archdruid of that time. He was robed in vestments of white and gold, which hung well on his venerable figure. He stood erect—a man of seventy-six years of age and with a magnificent presence. He was clean shaven, with longish hair ; with his round face his head appeared like that of Beethoven. He had an old-world courtesy of manner about him, and when he spoke his voice was sonorous and far-reaching, yet without the least touch of tremulousness. He belonged to a line of men who had preached their Master's gospel in many places and he would have scorned the use of the later microphone.

Notables of the Eisteddfod—Pedrog, Berw and Ben Davies, were the adjudicators for the crown poems, and Hwfa Môn now called on one of them to give the adjudication.

The subject was "The Prince of Peace." Two English poems had been sent in, but out of the six poems submitted, only two were worthy of the prize. The poem submitted under the

nom-de-plume of "Dan Ei Faner" ("Under His Banner") was adjudged the best.

Now came one of the most tense moments in the eisteddfod week. Who could "Dan Ei Faner" be? Then the Archdruid called in ringing tones for "Dan Ei Faner" to stand up and for all others to sit down.

Not far from where Nemiah and David sat, a tall, studious looking young man of about twenty-eight years of age, got up. He had a striking head of light red hair and he wore a moustache and spectacles. Then even the cool philosophic Nemiah got excited.

"Gwili!" he said, and the word flashed from mouth to mouth all through the Pavilion. Nemiah John's Gwynfryn friend had won the guerdon of the "National" and would henceforth rank with the Eisteddfod immortals.

Hwfa Môn sent two robed bards to bring him to the platform, and the sonorous voice then proclaimed that the winner was John Jenkins of Ammanford and native of Pontardulais, Glamorganshire—known better by his bardic title of "Gwili."

Then the crowning ceremony began. The huge sword was lifted high and in a horizontal position above the young poet's head. The Archdruid drew the blade partly out of its sheath, and his ringing challenge was given :

"A Oes Heddwch?" ("Is there peace?").

Three times he gave the challenge and three times the huge crowd responded "Heddwch!" with the first syllable drawn out. The sword was then driven home into its scabbard and lowered. The young bard was put to kneel and Hwfa Môn placed the bardic crown on his head. Then he arose and faced the audience amidst tumultuous clapping and cheering. Gwili—beloved of Wales and lover of Wales—was getting his first acclamation.

The crowning song was then sung to harp accompaniment and several of the robed bards came forth in turn to recite their congratulatory verses (*englynion*).

The following eisteddfodic notables of their day were at Gwili's crowning ceremony—Dyfed, Cadfan, Pedrog, Watkyn Wyn, Ifano, Job, Mabon, Gurnos, Myfyr Hefin, and Nathan Wyn.

As one of them came forward, Nemiah whispered to David :

"That's Myfyr Hefin, the brother of Ben Bowen who came second for the crown at the Liverpool Eisteddfod last year. Ben is in Africa trying to regain his health; he's now but a youngster of twenty-three years of age, and yet he nearly beat J. T. Job the winner, last year, and did beat several of the old hands."

David was beginning to feel the atmosphere of the Eisteddfod—with its direct competitive appeal. Many years after he was to see that bardic crown of Gwili's in a place of honour and to read the three words engraved upon it—"Duw, Dawn, Dysg" ("God, Inspiration, Learning").

Nemiah told David how Gwili had shown early promise and through the medium of a pupil teacher's centre, had gone to Gwynfryn and afterwards to Bangor University College. He was

now back in Gwynfryn assisting Watkyn Wyn as a tutor. (He was later to go to Jesus College, Oxford, become a Baptist College tutor, and an Oxford University Doctor of Literature, and in 1932 to wear the gold and white vestments of the Archdruid. In the latter honour he followed Pedrog, who followed in turn Elfed, Dyfed, Hwfa Môn and Clwydfardd.)

When the ceremony was over, the Gorsedd procession went out the way it came in. Years afterwards, when David saw the Greek play, "Oedipus Rex," acted in Cardiff (with Martin Harvey playing the part of Oedipus) and the "crowd" of the players garbed in Grecian robes rushing through the audience towards the stage, he wondered if there was some connection between the Welsh Druids and the Greek Players. They were both associated with religion, anyway.

After the crowning ceremony, the ladies' choir competition for 30-40 voices came on and the Carmarthen Ladies' Choir won the £25 prize.

Then the president of the afternoon session gave his address. Nemiah nudged David and said, "Look well at this man, David; his name is Keir Hardie and he's the Member of Parliament for this district—just like Mabon is the member for ours. He's the first member to go into Parliament as a Socialist—the first really Labour member. Men like Mabon have gone in as Liberals, and are often called "Liberal-Labour" or "Lib-Labs," but this man is striking a different note in working-class interests. He's not a man to be bought in any way—neither by money nor by honours; he lives austerity and goes to the House of Commons wearing a cloth cap. But he's very sincere, and sincerity, David, will often tell when all else fails."

"There is the Second Choral Competition to come on now, with a prize of £50, but we'd better go out, get some food, look up my friends who are going to put us up for the night, and return for tonight's concert."

This they did, and David that night heard the strains of Mendelssohn's masterpiece, "Elijah," sung by a huge choir of mixed voices under the conductorship of Dan Davies. The tenor soloist was the famous Ben Davies. It was a wonderful day of experience, and David went to hospitable lodgings where he ate a good supper and went off to a strange bed—tired, happy and much exhilarated in mind.

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The following morning they were up early to see the ceremony at the Gorsedd circle.

On the way Nemiah bought a daily paper.

"Well! Well!" he said, "they're still trying to fly in the air! Here's an account of Santos Dumont flying around the Eiffel Tower in Paris yesterday, and he's lucky to be alive today. He was sailing in his steerable balloon, when the thing suddenly burst and he and his contraption landed on the roofs. He was

rescued by firemen, much shaken, but unhurt. Well, I would rather have been Gwili than Santos Dumont yesterday !

They got to the Gorsedd circle of stones which was in the field the other side of the road to Penydaren Park, where the Eisteddfod was held, and David examined the circle with interest. There were twelve, rough, upright-standing stones in a circle, spaced at equal distances apart, and the diameter of the circle was seventy-five feet. There were two extra stones at the entrance, which was on the Eastern side, facing the rising sun. In the centre was a large platform of a stone called the *Maen Llog* (Logan Stone), from which the Archdruid controlled the Gorsedd circle ceremonies.

Nemiah John told David that the stones were rough because the mark of a chisel must not be upon them. He also spoke of the origins of the Gorsedd circle which was associated with druidic worship in this country, referring to the small stone circles to be seen in many parts of the country and the large ones of Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain and the huge one at Avebury. He said that the inner circle of stones at Salisbury Plain came from Pembrokeshire.

The Gorsedd procession then arrived and entered the circle of stones. Hwfa Môn ascended the Maen Llog. The ceremony of presenting the Hirlas Horn to the Archdruid was a pretty scene. The Gorsedd Prayer was recited. Eos Gorlan sang penillion composed by Watkyn Wyn to harp accompaniment, and candidate ovates were initiated to be new members of the Gorsedd. Dyfed and Cadfan gave spirited addresses from the Maen Llog. With the singing of the Welsh National Anthem, the early morning proceedings terminated and the Gorsedd procession returned to its robing quarters.

Nemiah and David returned to their lodgings to do full justice to a meal of bacon and eggs. How David enjoyed it after being out in the morning air ! He felt that he was in a new world and was grateful to Nemiah for this outing.

After breakfast they returned to the grounds of the Eisteddfod. Nemiah evinced no desire to go in to hear the competitions for he was waiting the arrival of his two boys who would come with the Gorlan party shortly. He also wanted to greet Gwili and congratulate him.

In walking around they found Gwili with a party of his cronies—Watkyn Wyn and some of the other notables previously mentioned. Nemiah greeted Gwili who was glad to see him again ; after exchanging news of each other, Gwili introduced him and David to the party. Its members were mostly Nonconformist ministers, although one with a clerical collar was thereby indicated as belonging to the Church of England. The Nonconformist minister had not adopted the "dog-collar" in those days. The frockcoat was more the symbol of ministry.

Watkyn Wyn told the three to sit down, adding, with a twinkle, "Gwili is used to being told to sit down."

Surmising a story, one of the party asked how that came about, and Watkyn Wyn replied :

"Well, it was like this. Gwili had sent in a poem for the chair competition at Lampeter in Cardiganshire in 1894. The subject was the 'Castles of Wales.' Elfed was the adjudicator and ten poems had been submitted. The winning nom-de-plume was called out and the winner told to stand on his feet.

"So Gwili here, then only twenty-two years of age (and looking even younger), brought his red head into prominence by standing up. Well, you know how persons stand up in their seats to see who the winner is, and in this way they obstruct the eisteddfod conductor in 'spotting the winner.'

"So an old wag of an eisteddfodwr sitting right behind Gwili's seat thought that this stripling in front of him was one of the obstructors. He therefore gave Gwili's coat-tail a jerk which brought Gwili back to his seat, saying at the same time, 'Sit down!' Gwili again tried to respond to the appeal for the winner to stand up, and once again the old wag told him to 'Sit down, mun.' The third time Gwili got up and by this time the old wag was getting tired of seeing this red head of Gwili's bobbing up in front of him continually and, 'seeing red' in another way, he roared out so that all could hear him :

'Sit down, Ginger, you devil' ("Ishte lawr, y cochyn diawl").

"So Gwili turned to him and said that he was the winner and the old wag responded with an air of grievance :

"Well—stand up, then!" ("Sefa lan te!")."

There was a round of laughter when Watkyn Wyn finished his story and the bright, laughing eyes of Gwili were dancing with boyish merriment. Watkyn Wyn was asked for another story, and Gwili said that although Watkyn Wyn was often given a second chance to tell stories he never got a second chance to preach anywhere.

"No, of course," was the witty retort, "I always give satisfaction on the first chance, and there is no need of a second!"

This fetched up a good laugh again, and David enjoyed these stories. Watkyn Wyn went on :

"Did you hear of Gwili's second chance to get shaved? Well. I'll tell you.

"When Gwili and Cefni Jones were fellow students and fellow-lodgers in Bangor during 1892-1896, Cefni could shave himself but Gwili couldn't and had to go to a barber's. Gwili felt that Cefni had the advantage of 'two-pence a time' over him, so one day he prevailed on Cefni to shave him.

"Now all of you know how a college student lives on the fat of the land" (much laughter over this irony), "and Gwili here had little pimples on his face in consequence. So poor Cefni was soon drawing blood and after he'd done one side, it was decided to desist. Consequently operations were suspended, and Gwili, with one side of his face shaved and plastered with little bits of paper and blood, went off to the barber to get the other side shaved.

" He returned to Cefni, nicely shaved, on one side and with scars on the other. He complained bitterly that the barber had charged him the full two-pence instead of a penny a side ! "

There was a roar of laughter at this again, in which Gwili joined.

" Well," said Gwili, " since Watkyn Wyn is ' blowing the gaff ' about my student days, I may as well tell you another experience I had in Bangor.

" We students used to go in turn to the Workhouse every Sunday afternoon to preach to the inmates, and my turn came along.

" Now I don't get my ' feet under me ' with those North Walians. They say that I preach too fast and that they don't understand my South Wales Welsh.

" However, at the Workhouse, one of the inmates was enjoying my preaching immensely, for his repeated ' Amens ' were a distinct encouragement to me. So I went all-out and felt that at last I had reached success as a preacher to a North Wales congregation.

" When the service was over, the master of the Workhouse came to me and said :

" I hope that man was not too much of a nuisance to you, Mr. Jenkins."

" ' Oh, no ! Not at all—Why ? ' I replied.

" ' Well,' was the answer, ' he won't be here to hinder next Sunday's student-preacher. He's being taken to Denbigh Asylum tomorrow ! ' "

Again there was a round of laughter as the gleeful Gwili completed the story.

As one of the party had a rather prominent set of false teeth (and they were rare in those days) Watkyn Wyn eyed them with apparent anxiety as their owner opened his mouth in laughter.

" Take care of those false teeth," said he, " or you'll be like a Dissenter minister I know of."

" ' Oh,' said someone, " what about him ? "

" Well," was the reply, " you'll remember the financial crash of the Liberator Building Society and the London and General Bank established by Jabez Balfour which caused widespread distress among small investors.

" This Dissenter minister, who had put some money into these ventures, and who wore false teeth, was told of the calamity on the street. He said no word, but opened his mouth so wide that his false teeth fell on to the pavement and were broken. So he lost both his money and his teeth."

The little gathering sobered off at this reminder of Jabez Balfour and the distress he caused. Ministers and members of the churches had been inveigled into this catastrophe and Jabez Balfour was sent to fourteen years imprisonment after a twenty-five days trial in November, 1895. David remembered his parents discussing it quite well. The misery caused in South Wales at the time was extensive, and many lost all their hard-earned savings. The

judge had some strong things to say to Jabez Balfour, and the latter was described in the papers as an "accomplished thief."

Long, long afterwards, some money was found out of the wreck and those who had kept their papers got some repayment. In fact, some of Jabez Balfour's ventures were said to be quite sound and wanted only time to materialise.

Someone wanted a light for his pipe and the box of matches he was offered gave him a reminder for another story.

"Did you hear of that Methodist preacher," said he, "who went to preach to the Baptists one Sunday morning on a change of pulpits?"

This referred to a custom in some towns and villages where once a year the Nonconformist ministers change over with each other for the Sunday morning services. He was told to proceed with his story, and he went on :

"Someone met a Methodist preacher returning from a service with the Baptists, and as he appeared somewhat despondent, he was asked, ' Didn't you have much fire in the Baptist service this morning ? '

"'Fire! Fire! did you say?' was the reply. 'Those *Batis* are like Bryant and May's Safety Matches—you can only fire (light) them off their own boxes!'"

This story restored the party to high good humour, but it was now time for Nemiah and David to go to meet the train and Nemiah's two small sons. It was with reluctance that they left these jovial raconteurs, for Nonconformist ministers generally have a repertoire of endless tales. When they are lodged over a week-end for Sunday services they are known to keep the families from their beds by relating these stories to rapt audiences. The stories may be true or otherwise, but the above stories are true, except possibly for very minor details and the method in which they are told. The stories about Gwili have been authenticated.

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Nemiah and David met the party brought along by Mr. Davies, the schoolmaster of Gorlan, and Nemiah had permission to take his two boys to see the Gorsedd circle and the "sights" of the Eisteddfod grounds. They all had a meal together in the grounds. The boys, who had good voices for singing, were returned to the schoolmaster, and Nemiah and David went into the afternoon's meeting. Mabon was the conductor.

There may be two or three conductors in the National Eisteddfod, acting in turn, and on this occasion there were two. The other was Gurnos, who had a large bald patch with a longish fringe of hair to it. He was clean-shaven like Hwfa Môn, and he wore a frock-coat. Mabon had a full head of hair and was bearded, so that they offered a contrast in appearance.

The conductor of the Eisteddfod makes the announcements and is expected to make some witticisms in order to keep the gathering

in good humour, especially while there are some pauses in the proceedings. There are often questions thrown to the conductor from the audience and he is expected to hold his own in these good-humoured sallies.

Mabon announced that the next item was "Penillion singing" for quartettes of boys. The only competitors were from Gorlan and there were five quartettes. They had all been trained by Mr. Davies, the schoolmaster, who would accompany them on the piano.

The quartettes sang in turn and David was very pleased to see the audience nod appreciatively.

After that, the schoolmaster brought them all into a choir of twenty voices and they sang the penillion together.

When they finished, there was a loud outburst of cheering and a call for an encore. When they reappeared, Mabon proudly pointed to them and said, "Here is Mabon's little choir—Abraham and his sons for ever!" This homely touch brought more loud cheering.

After the encore, Eos Gorlan, the adjudicator (who had probably written the penillion) gave his adjudication, and Nemiah's two boys were in the winning quartette. The prize was £2 2s. od., but the agent of the Gorlan pits came forward and awarded each of the other quartettes 10s. od. each. Nemiah and David were very pleased at all this. David felt that the honour of Gorlan was well upheld that day.

Nemiah and the boys stayed to see some of the other competitions afterwards, and then made for the railway station—and home.

The following day at the Eisteddfod, Dyfed was awarded the bardic chair for his *awdl* (ode) on "The Reformer." It was his fifth "National" chair, his first having been won in the Merthyr Eisteddfod of 1881. Dafydd Morganwg gave out the adjudication.

The awards for the chair and crown carry money prizes of about £20 each.

The *awdl* (ode) is a long poem employing the twenty-four ancient measures (or rules) of alliterative verse, known as, the *cynghaneddion*.

The *pryddest*, for which the crown is awarded, is a long poem which is free of *cynghanedd* and similar to the usual type of classic English poetry.

The chief choral competition saw the £200 prize and a gold mounted baton awarded to an English choir from the Staffordshire Potteries, their first of several successes at the National Eisteddfod. The choir was from 170 to 200 voices and they sang Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise."

Before the Gorsedd left the platform that day the subject of the *awdl* for next year's Eisteddfod at Bangor was announced. It was "The Passing of Arthur," which produced a winning poem of rare merit and proved to be one of the most momentous awards in eisteddfodic history.

CHAPTER IX

GORLAN'S SUMMER SPORTING MOODS

THE following day was Friday and David woke up as one who had trod Elysian fields. Derfel Pugh contacted him and had to be told all about the National Eisteddfod.

"Well David," he said, "you may have enjoyed yourself seeing those old fellows in their night-shirts, but I've some news for you. Dic-Shon-Dafydd wants us at the school this afternoon to help with this darkie minstrel stuff for the school concert. He's going to bring off the concert early next month and wants to go off to France next week—*Parley-vous français*—don't you know. By gosh, I wonder if the French understand *his* French. After tea, we'll go to see the cycling on the tip field. By the way, our mothers have decided that we don't go to work until the school concert is over and old Dic-Shon-Dafydd is keen on that, too."

Davies, the schoolmaster, was in really good humour after the success of his boys at the National Eisteddfod the day before. This was very different from the Friday afternoons when he got all the school together to teach them songs like "Larboard Watch." Then, in view of his assistants, he would lash himself into a fury and thrash the boys with his penny cane. On one occasion one of the boys caught fire; the schoolmaster had struck the boy's pocket in which there was a box of matches. These singing lessons were real pantomimes! He probably suffered from nerves, which the libations of the Clarence Hotel failed to soothe.

He had, however, no academic snobbery about him and loved to assist the adults of the village to learn cricket and singing. He was always ready to adjudicate in the little eisteddfodau or penny readings of the chapels.

The trip to France found him as the "guide, philosopher and friend" to a party of colliers, and they had an interesting holiday. The only complaint came from a tight-fisted old bachelor who was sea-sick on both the channel crossings. It was—why on earth had Dic-Shon-Dafydd got them to pay second-class fares instead of third-class, when nearly all the time was spent in the lavatories?

This was not unlike the South Wales colliery owner, who, when asked why he travelled in third-class compartments, answered, "Because there are no fourths!"

The schoolmaster gave David and Derfel their parts all written out in beautiful handwriting (in which he was a prize-winner) so that they could learn them while he was on the "fair field of France."

During the evening, David found himself waiting for Derfel beside the cycle track of the tip field. The cycling craze was definitely abating in Gorlan, but about three or four years previously the Gorlanites were cycling-mad.

Rudge-Whitworths were bought at the local ironmongers' and the colliery management carted soil to form some kind of rough track outside the football or cricket pitch. That field had seen many changing phases in the sporting life of Gorlan. For some years Rugby football goalposts would throw out their high arms to the heavens. A period of rest would follow and then soccer football would appear. Some time later, frantic search and enquiries would be made as to what had happened to the Rugby goal posts. This would herald Gorlan's reversion to Rugger.

For cricket, the bowlers and batsmen had to put up with a great element of chance. If the volleyed ball from the schoolmaster's hand landed on a protruding piece of slag, it was a case of "every man for himself."

Football teams in succession had tried to get gate-money to help to pay expenses. This innovation Gorlan resented. To pay into collections every Sunday in the Chapels was one thing, but to waste money on seeing a game was beyond their serious consideration. So the teams arranged for collections to be made in order to come into line with the Chapels. This was a strain on the mentality of the spectators, and the players had to be content with paying their own expenses !

On the down-slope side of the tip field was a path, and, ensconced from the gaze of the more respectable Gorlan, David had from time to time watched men and dogs racing.

Yes, Gorlan was extremely fortunate to possess the tip field, and there was a very democratic note of possession about it.

When school-boys were playing cricket or football on it, their resentment in having to give way to the cricket or football of adults was deep. They had as much right there as these grown-ups—and they were there first, weren't they ? The men really enjoyed this resentment—it was so Gorlan in spirit !

When Gorlan went cycling mad, a cycle club was formed—with captain, secretary, treasurer and badges with "Gorlan Cycling Club" engraved in enamel thereon.

Of course, the non-members said that the Cycling Club was afraid to venture further than the Cemetery on their bicycles. There was much truth in this, but on the cycling track of the tip field, the cycles were really put to the test. Round and round they would go, a baker with a racing cycle trying to obtain the guerdon for being the best as over low handle bars he "scorched" at a terrific pace.

After all, was not the track the best place to cycle when police and unsympathetic magistrates levied fines of twenty shillings and costs if a speed of fourteen miles per hour was approached on the roads ?

There was a story of an adventurous soul who borrowed a brand-new bicycle from a friend "to go only as far as the cemetery, and back." As he rode away, his soul became as that of a winged centaur ; he whizzed past the cemetery and got to a place twelve

miles away. From there, he, his sticking plaster and his battered steed returned by train !

Then there was the aged cobbler who caught the infection and with flowing beard would follow in the wake of the scorching baker. He was hailed as a great sport, and his charges more closely scrutinised than ever before !

Gorlan as a community did not believe in *paying* for sport !

The grinning Derfel arrived with a bone-shaker.

" My father and mother bought this for me second-hand," he said, " and paid two pounds for it. They're trying to bribe me from going down the pit, but if I go down and earn money, then I can buy a *Rudge-Whitworth* with pneumatic tyres.

" The advantage of this bone-shaker is that you get no punctures. By the way, I've heard tell that since Shon the cobbler took to riding a bicycle with pneumatic tyres, he won't put those three-pronged ' protectors ' under the soles of boots and shoes any more. Well, ta ! ta ! David, I'm going to join the roundabouts."

David watched his friend with some envy as the latter pushed the bicycle with his left foot on the back step and then leapt into the saddle. The bicycle wobbled uncomfortably and then fell on its side.

Giving more impetus the second time, the amateur managed to get going and to join about a dozen cyclists, but kept on the inner side of the track. When he found that he could not keep up with them, he attracted laughing attention by cutting across the diameter of the track to get in front of the scorching baker. Presently he got really going, and, still attracting attention, he crossed the track and went in the reverse direction to the others ! Then he put his head down low to imitate the baker and went all-out—keeping safely within the track. The watchers howled with laughter at these antics and shouted remarks such as " Go it, Derfel," " You've got the baker beaten," " Got your second wind yet, Derfel ? " " They'll make you captain ! " " What price the winning bone-shaker ! " etc.

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The cyclists were racing madly around when a shout went up. A walking match between Gorlan's best walkers was afoot, for the " Wiltshire Spider " had been challenged by the " Shropshire Fly."

From the top field they were seen coming down the road from Dare with a horse brake containing umpire and supporters close behind.

The brake proprietor had two brakes—the one-horse affair referred to, which would hold eight passengers and the other, which would hold twice as many, but required two horses. These would be harnessed side by side with a pole between them to which the brake was attached.

This latter vehicle boasted the name *charabanc* and was used

by the football teams of Gorlan when they had to play away from their native tip.

We have met the brake and its remarkably garbed driver before when they set the pace to Gorlan's first motor-car. Now "Dizzy" and Billy the Brake were in another role.

The watchers on the tip espied who was beside the jarvey. There was no mistaking *that* hat either—it belonged to Gorlan's crack shot, appropriately nicknamed "Crack-shot George." After taking part in some valley shooting tournament and winning some trophies, George went down to Cardiff and invested in a light grey tweed Norfolk sporting suit with knicker-bockers and stockings to match ; the latter had ornate turn-down tops to them. He also had brown shooting boots, and—(here Gorlan literally gasped !) a dark green Tyrol hat with a spray of small gaudy coloured feathers on its side. It must have been the only one in the whole valley, and Gorlan was at a loss how to pass judgment upon it.

George, however, was a class all to himself. He had a beautiful two-barrelled gun and a row of silver cups in his house. Rumour had it that one of them had been won at Bisley, but of that, confirmation was lacking.

Derfel had taken David on one occasion to see a pigeon-shooting match on a little flat green field below the village, and George and other lesser shooting lights were there.

The fifteen traps holding the pigeons were in a row at some distance away. There were five competitors and they were to have three trials each. The winner would be the one who shot the most pigeons. Attached to the door of each trap was a string which extended to the safe position behind the shooters ! Here all the strings were gathered to the control of one man. The shots were to shoot in turn and one trap at a time to be opened accordingly. There were two pigeons in each trap corresponding with the two barrels of each gun. Joe "Pigeons" was in charge of the string-pulling operations and he had been given the task of providing the pigeons. Joe had no respect for "tumbler" pigeons, for in pigeon-racing these birds would be indulging in aeronautic acrobatics, instead of making for "Home-Sweet-Home !" So he had collected all tumblers for this day of destruction, and fifteen pairs of pigeons were in the traps.

"Crack-shot George" was in position for the honour of making the first shots when Derfel and David appeared on the scene. He was attired in his full regalia for this auspicious occasion, the hat being his crowning glory. With gun in readiness, the word was given for Joe to open one of the traps.

Whether Joe was struck with remorse at the part he had played in bringing pigeons to the slaughter, or whether he wanted to "put one over" George, the records of Gorlan will never reveal with certainty.

What the astonished George saw was not one pair of pigeons rising to his gun, but fifteen pairs, for Joe had pulled all the strings

at the same time. These flew over the disgusted George's head and as they rose he was too flabbergasted to make a single shot. Round and round circled the pigeons, and as they began to indulge in a tumbling competition of their own, the now exasperated George said "D—— it all ! they are thumbing their noses at me !" and let off his two barrels without hitting one.

But we must return to the horse-brake which contained George and his complete costume of a real sportsman.

These walking matches were Gorlan's latest craze in the world of sport. Two so-called political clubs would challenge each other and send their members forth in full walking kit to win honours for the clubs.

These clubs did not show undue political bias, and provided alcoholic refreshments when the public-houses were closed, notably on Sundays.

The walking contests would start from the clubs, but, of the many who started, few returned who had stayed the whole of the course. The chapel element looked askance at these clubs, and in referring to the walking matches would state that the strain on the thirsty walkers when passing public-houses must be the most severe trial of the races !

The watchers from the tip saw the two champions of their respective clubs coming down the road from Dare in fine style—the "Shropshire Fly" leading by about a dozen yards. Suddenly he stopped dead, staggered to the side and leaned upon the wall. As the "Wiltshire Spider" passed him, he valiantly followed, spurted beyond his competitor, only to stagger again to the side. Some fits of dizziness through over-exertion had overtaken him, but he was game and after getting over a fit he would carry on with his task.

The watchers viewed all this with interest. One said :

"Reminds me of doing sums—that fellah ! "

"What d'you mean by 'doing sums ?'" was the query.

"Well, 'dot down and carry one,' " was the reply.

Another said :

"He reminds me of that new chap they've got in the Salvation Army band. That one what does the 'go from me—come back' all the time." He meant the trombone player !

As the lamp-post on the Gorlan square was the winning post and as the competitors and brake were going out of view past the railway station, the whole of the watchers tore off to the square to see the finish of the race. It was after they had gone that the "Shropshire Fly" decided to give in. He was helped up beside the driver, the others told to vacate the body of the brake, while George took up a stand behind the driver's seat.

Perhaps George remembered the tumbler pigeons and did not like another fiasco. He whispered to the driver, who laughed, nodded and spat his agreement into the road.

There was a gentle rising incline from the railway station along

a terrace of houses before a bend in the road revealed the competitors to the crowd at the square. But from the bend to the square was a distance of a hundred yards of steep road, the gradient being one in seven.

The horses of Gorlan knew that hill only too well, and it was customary for the drivers to be behind the vehicles with stones or brick-bats to put behind the wheels when the horse got winded. With his hand-brake handle by his side there was no need for the driver of a vehicle with a brake to do this.

What the watchers saw was first the brake containing the driver, the "Shropshire Fly" in white kit and the unmistakable hat of "Crack-shot George" behind. The brake halted at the foot of the steeper hill, and as the plodding "Spider" came abreast of it, George waved his flag and the steed was put into the competition!

The horse spurted in front of the "Wiltshire Spider" who, with smiling face entered into the spirit of this new competition which was now imposed upon him. He plodded on.

At a third of the way up, the cob loyally bore in mind the equine rights of Gorlan and stopped suddenly. The brake was applied. After the "Spider" had passed, "Dizzy" had to respond to a loudly cracking whip and spurted on in front of the "Spider" again.

At this the watchers at the square and the supporters around the competitors were laughing, shouting and cheering the competitors; but "Dizzy" was entitled to one more rest on that hill, and despite the supporters now pushing the vehicle from behind, he stopped suddenly.

"What's up with the horse?" asked the "Shropshire Fly" to the driver.

"Oh!" was the reply, "he must be dizzy like you—only he happens to be 'Dizzy' all the time." Here he spat vigorously into the road and laughed at his own wit.

They were now within earshot of the laughing crowd on the square. The "Spider" was abreast again. "Crack-shot George" forgot his impartiality as an umpire. He was waving his flag as the banner of a "do-or-die" cause.

The driver stood up in his seat and with an unforgettable exhibition of whip-cracking shouted, to the huge delight of the crowd :

"Forward—My Lord Beaconsfield!"

The amazed "Dizzy" breasted his last length valiantly, but the grinning "Spider" finished up by passing the lamp-post a few yards in front of him!

The closing tableau was the brake on the centre of the Gorlan Square. In it were the two original competitors who shook hands in a very sporting manner. Beside them was "Crack-shot George," who declared that the "Wiltshire Spider" had well and truly won the race—in fact both races. The Chairman of the

winning club then presented the "Spider" with a purse of sovereigns and the landlord of the Gorlan Hotel (who had been watching the finish from his first-floor windows, came out with another sovereign for the "Spider," "for having beaten Lord Beaconsfield."

Not only that, but bringing a horse's straw sun bonnet (which was then in vogue), into view, he put it on "Dizzy's" head. It had two holes through which the cob's ears were negotiated, while with ribbons tied around its neck, the headgear was firmly secured.

"Dizzy" now looked like a coquettish spinster, and wore a seasonable headgear worthy in comparison with that of the driver and "Crack-shot George."

The cheering and hilarious crowd, including David and Derfel, dispersed to their homes to tell the story, and the following day it was the topic of laughing discussion, even to the uttermost headings of the Gorlan pits.

CHAPTER X

JOURNEY TO PEMBROKESHIRE

THE following Monday found Nemiah John and his family on the way to Abergwaun (Fishguard) and David accompanied them.

When Nemiah got back from the National Eisteddfod, a letter of some importance awaited him. His old master, the weaver, had died, and the weaver's childless widow wanted Nemiah's help about the disposal of the business. There was a hint in the letter about Nemiah taking it over. She would pay his trainfare and he and his family, if they so desired, could stay with her.

This was an opportunity for a holiday which was too good to miss. Nemiah showed the letter to the pit manager and was allowed to take a holiday for a week or so. Nemiah's wife and two boys were delighted, and they wanted to take David with them. Naomi Bowen readily agreed to let David go.

So David's savings from his Saturday's earnings were investigated and instead of financing articles for his attire, they were now to finance a holiday.

He would stay with his grandfather and aunt, and his funds were sufficient for the trip. Letters passed accordingly.

So Mrs. John and the two boys, together with all the luggage, were sent round by the railway junction of Ponty Enfys, while Nemiah and David made the four-mile walk over the mountain to the G.W.R. station of Dare. In this way they saved about twenty miles of trainfare and had the enjoyment of walking to the accompaniment of soaring skylarks and the chirping of innumerable grass-hoppers.

As they commenced to walk down the slope on the Dare side of the mountain plateau a man, who was leaning on the fence, joined them. Nemiah and he were soon in conversation, and the stranger complimented Nemiah on being able to afford a holiday and said that he couldn't manage it. Nemiah enquired why, and jocularly asked if drink was the trouble. David always remembered that man's reply, although at that time his young and inexperienced mind could not grasp the full significance of an acquired habit.

"No," said the stranger. "Drink has no grip on me—I could drop it to-morrow. But I am far worse than a drunkard—I am a gambler!"

Nemiah looked at him with sympathy and surprise. "My friend," said he, "can't you give it up? If you can't find strength within yourself, can't you turn to God—the Spirit of all Goodness, and ask for his strength to resist your temptation?"

"I don't know how to pray" was the answer, "all I know is that I must have the excitement from day to day of backing horses

I've never seen. I suppose that this craving for excitement and the desire to win money easily is to me what the craving of drink is to another man. My mind is engrossed with the chances of my winning until I get the result. I win and I lose, but I cannot drop it."

"Does it pay?" asked Nemiah.

"Oh, yes!" was the reply, "for the bookies! I rarely win and often lose, but it has a grip on me and I feel that I must go on."

They were now at the railway station. Nemiah took the stranger's hand. He said :

"We're all gamblers in some way or another. Life is a gamble to a great extent. We lose and win, but if we keep our faces towards the Eternal Light, our wins are greater than our losses. You've half won your battle, my friend, for it's evident that you know that the grip upon you is evil. Will you allow this craving to be the master of the soul that has been given you? Will you not seek a higher craving to do the good God's will? Good should conquer evil. Good-bye, and may the Spirit of all Goodness, which we call God, help you to win the reward which no one can take away from you."

The stranger's eyes lit up. He raised his head and looked at Nemiah level-eyed.

"Thank you," he said simply and thoughtfully and then turned away.

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Nemiah's family arrived and the yellow tin trunk was transferred to the train that was journeying to Swansea. Nemiah's new leather Gladstone bag and David's carpet bag were taken into the compartment. David, with a knowledge of B. D. Long and Son's prices, assessed the value of that leather bag. It was twenty-four inches long, therefore its price was twenty-four shillings; if eighteen inches, then eighteen shillings. It was all so simple.

They were now in a Great Western Railway compartment with the divisions taken right up to the ceiling and the seatings upholstered. There was a story about a mining valley man who had never travelled except by the Taff Vale Railway. When urged by a friend to enter a third class compartment of the G.W.R. he said, "Jawch, mun—I can't find a 'third class' on this train. They're all 'first classes'!"

When passing through Neath Nemiah said: "The Neath and Brecon line starts from here and runs through some beautiful scenery. If you ever travel by it, David, look on your left when you reach Penwyllt station and you'll see 'Craig-y-Nos,' the home of Madame Patti, the great singer. Her full name is 'Baroness Patti-Cederstorm,' and although she bought 'Craig-y-Nos' at a reasonable price, she's said to have spent £100,000 on it since. King Edward is reported to be considering the purchase of it for one of the royal princesses, but I doubt if that

will come off. There's a feeling in Wales that the Prince of Wales should have a residence in the Principality, and when the Duke and Duchess of York" (afterwards King George V and Queen Mary) "come back from their world cruise on the *Ophir*, they'll be made Prince and Princess of Wales."

"Tell us more about this Patti," said one of the boys.

"Well," said Nemiah, "she's an Italian singer who was born at Madrid in 1843, so she is fifty-eight years of age now. She has a most wonderful voice and is said to be the finest soprano in the world. She sprang to fame in America when she was only sixteen years of age. Her voice is lasting remarkably well and for the past six years she has been giving farewell concerts in London! There's a rumour that she has sold her throat to the surgeons and when she is dead they are going to examine it to see the cause of her wonderful voice."

"She's not only a good singer, but a good actress as well, which is very useful in some of the parts she sings. Madam Patti has had a wonderful career and is called the 'Queen of Song.'"

"Was she better than Jenny Lind?" asked Mrs. John.

"Jenny Lind was Swedish," was the reply, "and before Patti's time. She was born in 1820 and died in this country in 1887. I remember the talk about her when she died. She was said to have made a more charitable use of her voice than Patti, and would sing in hospitals and like places for nothing. She was a great favourite in her time."

[Patti's farewell concerts lasted until 1908 and she died in 1919.]

It was a pleasure to look out of the train upon fields, hedges and trees instead of coal pits, and tips, and Nemiah showed the three boys all subjects of interest.

The train they were in was bound for Haverfordwest and Neyland, so they had to change at Clynderwen in order to travel north to Abergwaun.

When David had been to Abergwaun seven years earlier, the journey had to be made by coach from Haverfordwest. Now the G.W.R. was making Abergwaun into a port for Irish trade, and the party arrived at Abergwaun's new railway station.

A horse brake took them to the house of the weaver's widow where they all had tea. Then the party took David to his grandfather's house in the lower town on the old quay side.

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Abergwaun comprises an upper and a lower town and the connection between them is a long steep hill with a gradient of one in seven. The river Gwaun, flowing from the lovely reaches of Glyn-y-Mel (Glen of Honey) empties into a small inner bay where the road bridge spans the river outlet. Ben Bowen, the young Welsh poet, at that time in Africa, had spent some time there and wrote a poem about this lovely little glen. For verdant Glyn-y-mel was itself a poem of scenery—with high rock rising above the

Plas (large house). In days gone by, the pageantry of gathering fox hunters, attired in pink coats and black peaked caps was seen in its grounds. David remembered seeing them seven years before. But the old squire was now dead and the old man-made pageantry had departed with him. Yet Creation's rare beauty remained around the tall house in the grounds. At the entrance, large-leaved fig trees bore unripening fruit and along the drive and walks, headstones proclaimed the old squire's sorrow for the loss of his favourite hounds. One stated :

“ Stop, stranger, stop and shed a tear,
For Frantic, the hound, lies buried here.”

Near the Quay, a steam yacht belonging to the Squire was moored seven years previously, but this, too, had disappeared.

The upper town bore a mediaeval character—its fine square throwing out crooked arms of routes to different directions. Facing the square stood the old market house with its court of justice in the storey above. The old Church stood on the other side of it and near its walls a stone tablet to commemorate the valour of Jemima Nicholas in 1797, when the French invaders landed on the coast. Large-sized inns stood on it as well, notably *The Commercial* and *The Royal Oak*, which had seen a good deal of local history. Some shops and offices completed its perimeter.

The houses of the old town were small with picturesque roof lines. It was in one of these that David had first seen the light of day. The house had a large garden behind, and at the end of it a pig-stye which contained a pig. With the development of Abergwaun as a port, new streets of modern houses were being erected.

David's parents had been pressed to return here, but Naomi Bowen had no desire to return to the environment of many relations. She had cut her craft loose from the fleet and was determined to steer her own independent course with her own strong will and capable hands.

The lower town was reached after passing over the river bridge and here the tiny houses were huddled together on narrow streets. These led to the Quay where coasting vessels landed their cargoes into the store-houses built upon it.

When David was there previously, three little wooden sailing ships were seen unloading the cargoes in the cove, and carts would go down beside them when the tide was out in order to cart away the cargo. David remembered only the name of one of them and that was the *Jane*.

A number of boats floated together near the quay wall and on the parapet of the projecting portion of the quay wall some fishing nets hung to dry.

David's grandfather and aunt lived in a small detached house on the Quay and behind it rose the sheer and rocky slope of the headland.

On the other side of the cove a tiny valley emptied its little stream, along which a timber-yard and a few old houses were built. This little valley was termed *The Slade*. This word is found in cognate forms in Danish, Norwegian and German dialects and there may be some remote connection between it and the Scandinavian rovers who harried the Welsh shores in far-off days. The word comes from Old English and means a valley, dell or dingle, or an open space between banks or woods.

The past century had seen the building of wooden ships in the Slade and these were launched by sliding them from the little valley into the cove. Possibly other centuries had seen the same performance and the Norse invaders had found the hidden Slade and cove very suitable.

A large four-storied building lay between the Slade and the river bridge. This was similar to that seen in other small ports of the west coast of Wales.

The new quay and breakwater were being constructed on the other headland—a mile away to the west. Here the rocky slope was being hewn and blasted away to provide the level accommodation of port buildings and port railway station. The rock was crushed and used to make huge concrete blocks for the breakwater. Near this work, but on the Abergwaun town side, a lovely little bay existed and this had a fair stretch of hard grey sand. It was on this stretch that the French invaders had laid down their arms in surrender in 1797.

Abergwaun as a whole presented a fine scenic appearance. When David was only nine years of age, the teacher of his class asked if one of them could describe what was meant by "beautiful scenery," and David got up and described Abergwaun.

The coast line of Pembrokeshire is extremely beautiful, and the people are inherently hospitable.

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When David led the way into his grandfather's house there was much greeting in the tiny kitchen, and David soon left Nemiah and his wife there and took the two boys around places familiar to him.

Old Cradoc Bowen was now seventy-eight years of age, and in his prime he had been a fine figure of man with a handsome head. He then stood fully six feet tall and his broad shoulders indicated great physical strength. A woman who had cause to know him in his prime described him years later as "A fine-looking man with curls, but beauty and wickedness often go together!" He was the product of that tough and rough period of the early nineteenth century, and he had never been known to fail in gaining his ends.

He would relate how he would not dream of going about without his lathing axe, which is something like a tomahawk, in the rule pocket of his corduroy trousers. He had gone to the older mining

valleys when they were far rougher than they were later and when parochial patriotism was the cause of ready bloodshed.

At Ebbw Vale, when Tom Sayers (1826-1865), the pugilist who had won the championship of the prize ring in 1857, was touring the country with his "bare-fist" boxing booth, Cradoc Bowen had stripped to the waist and accepted the champion's challenge. History does not record what really happened, but those who knew David's fierce grandfather felt some sort of sympathy for Tom Sayers !

On one occasion he was working along the coast at a place called Porthgain. Some industrial activity had brought him and others to the district, and a great big bully of a fellow, a stranger, was intimidating his fellow-workmen. Cradoc Bowen could stand no intimidation, and, after a few words of quarrel, challenged the bully to a bare fist prize fight for a sovereign a side.

Stripped to the waist, the big-framed warriors set to with real vengeance. Cradoc Bowen's iron fists proved too much for his opponent, who gave in after only one round !

On another occasion, Cradoc Bowen and a friend had walked into a bar parlour and quite unexpectedly found themselves surrounded by enemies who promptly closed the door to prevent their retreat.

The grim old warrior took in the situation at a glance. Shouting to his friend to guard his back, he caught up one of the heavy oak chairs of that period, and with berserk fury used his improvised weapon with skill, strength and utter lack of mercy. His enemies fled through the door they had so readily closed behind him, and the bar parlour was soon clear of them.

This story came to the Gorlan Bowens from the daughter of the inn-keeper, accompanied with the complaint that the chair was badly damaged and had never been paid for !

In any case, Cradoc Bowen, in old age, looked strong, although shrunken, and his well-complexioned face showed no trace of scars from Tom Sayers or anyone else, nor was he maimed in any way. He still had a good head of hair—now almost white—and with a fringe behind. He also wore a fringe beard which left his mouth with remnants of strong large teeth in view. His blue eyes could still look fierce when he was roused. These were deeply set above his large Roman nose.

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Nemiah gave the old man a cake of tobacco which had to be cut up with a pocket knife before being charged into the bowl of his pipe.

"Well, Nemiah," said the old warrior, " You've come at the right time, for early on Wednesday morning, with the tide to suit us, we're going to do some fishing from Twll-y-Sân. The nets are repaired and are out there on the quay wall. What do you say to that ? "

"What do you want me to do, Cradoc Bowen?" asked Nemiah.

"We want a good strong rower," was the reply. "I can't row now like I used to, but I can steer a bit. You must be 'soft' now after working in those hot pits, and we shall not expect you to stand in the water."

"Well, Cradoc Bowen," said Nemiah, "I'll strike a bargain with you. I'm writing an essay on the industrial conditions in South Wales during the past century and I want to send it in for an Eisteddfod competition. I know you took part in the Rebecca Riots here in Abergwaun in 1843. I want you to tell me all you know about them and to show me at the site of the Abergwaun toll-gate what really happened there. We could go there on Thursday so that we could be clear of the fishing and selling the fish, and you could come up the hill in Evans' milkcart. Now what do you say?"

The old man's blue eyes kindled for a moment with a bygone memory and he readily agreed, adding with some significance that talking about the riots would be a *dry task*!

For Cradoc Bowen had a life-long reputation of being fond of intoxicating liquor and this was the cause of his poverty. David's grandmother came from a family of business and some wealth. They kept a corn mill inland from Abergwaun and the daughter fell in love with the handsome young mason and married him.

They were set up in a corn mill and woollen factory in Lower Town and the house adjoining the water mills was a handsome three-storey building. Here they lived and had three children, two sons and one daughter, David's father being the eldest.

Cradoc Bowen carried the proceeds of the business to a nearby inn and in consequence spent all his wife's money. The result was that after thirteen years of married life, they had to leave the mill and their commodious house and go to the little cottage which Cradoc Bowen now inhabited.

The shame and strain of this proved too much for David's grandmother, for she fell ill, and died within three years. Her elder son worshipped her and would walk back long distances from work at mid-day in order to see that she did not lack the little attention he could give her in her long illness.

In cherishing his mother's memory, Thomas Bowen never really forgave his grim old sire for the misery he had caused. Probably this bitter remembrance was the chief cause why he became a total abstainer, for he did for his own children what his own father had failed to do.

All this history was woven into the fibre of the Gorlan Bowens, for Naomi's disgust at her father-in-law was too great to be hidden, even from children. That they contributed regularly monthly sums towards the maintenance of the old reprobate did not help matters.

David and the boys had now returned and saying that they

would call for David in the morning, Nemiah and his family took their departure.

After replying to many questions about his family and Gorlan, the tired David was given supper, and then a candle and sent up a steep flight of wooden steps into the loft of the small cottage. He was soon asleep.

§

The following morning he awoke to hear the sea-gulls screaming around the house. He dressed and climbed down the steep flight of steps which had proved a really dangerous procedure seven years before. He fetched water from the spring which emptied at the back of the house and washed himself. Then, after a breakfast of fried herring he went off to wait for Nemiah on the river bridge. He inhaled deeply of the sea-smelling breeze that blew inland.

He leaned over the parapet and watched the trout in the clear stream with some fascination until Nemiah and his family gave him a cheerful greeting.

Then they turned up the glen to the right of the river and came to the deserted mill. Nemiah opened its door with a key and found the loom with its unfinished length of grey flannel shirting still undisturbed.

He put the water-wheel in motion and showed his wife and the boys how the loom worked. The action of the flying shuttle which carried the cross yarn interested the boys greatly.

"This loom," said Nemiah, "wove the blankets you've on your bed at home, David. Your mother, before she was married, bought wool as it came from the sheep—so many pounds of it, and had it woven into blankets here. And wonderful blankets they are, too—everlasting, I should say. I'm not so sure but that my old master did the weaving as a wedding present for her, for he had a great regard for both your father and your mother."

David felt that this was just like his mother—to get what was the best material and to use it to the best advantage. His heart warmed within him.

With the aid of a Singer's sewing machine, she had taught herself to cut out and make garments. She would go to their tailor friend in Gorlan and buy remnants of good all-wool cloth for a shilling or two and then make coats and trousers for him out of them. She was even now knitting him a pair of grey worsted stockings which he would wear to go to work.

The woollen mill was small and Nemiah and his wife were in earnest conversation about it. Once again it was a matter of family economics. If the mill had provided only a fair living for a childless couple, how could it provide for a family of four? The marketing of the product was also a serious problem. The steam mills were turning out rolls upon rolls of flannel and cloth and these were marketed in travelling vans in the mining valleys

at low cost compared with what the little mill could produce. But some miners' wives still preferred to buy the local "gwaith cartref" (home-made).

Then there was the matter of education for the boys, while Nemiah would have to lead a monastic kind of life as compared with the life in the pits. For Nemiah was interested in the welfare of his fellow human beings and the varied problems of life were subjects for solution in his mind and heart.

Mrs. John and the three boys went out into the sunshine. Nemiah looked at the now silent loom sadly, and shook his head with regret. Here was another little rural industry, with the fine type of man like his old master, fading out of the life of Wales. It was a loss—but was it all loss? He and his wife had thrown their economics into the balance and they had found the mill wanting.

There was something remarkably fine in this rural type of life—there was a quiet cultural note about it. As he stood looking at the loom he could imagine that he heard his old master singing in time to the movement of it. He sang some of the old songs of Wales and the hymn tunes of long-dead Williams Pantycelyn and his soul would soar to the heavenly places as he sang them. Well! Well!! He had gone there altogether now, but he had known the experience of the Master who had said :

"The kingdom of heaven is within you."

But did not the coal-pits with their unromantic grime and sweat not hold some parallel culture? In the rough-tongued hurly-burly of the colliers as they massed to go down or up the pit shaft, was there not the gold thread glistening in the dark pattern of it all? Had not young Ben Bowen in the pit in the adjoining valley written verses of intrinsic value on his *curling box* with chalk?

It was from these rural areas that most of the innumerable and varying threads had come to the mining valleys. The pits were like the vertical threads of the loom and the villages and the pit galleries were like the horizontal threads; the warp and the woof of the pattern of life. And on this loom of the colliery districts the pattern of South Wales life was being strongly woven; but the threads were of great variety and the pattern consequently more intricate. Yes, there were golden threads there, too. He knew the hearts of those rough-tongued colliers and they were great hearts—brave hearts.

Nemiah sighed as he turned away from the loom; he closed the door and locked it with the air of a man who had made a final decision.

The rest of the party had left him at the loom and were now looking for trout in the mill stream. Nemiah shook himself mentally and described the action of the flowing water on the water-wheel, but his soul found itself listening once again to the sound of the loom and the songs of his old master. As he looked at the flow of the mill stream and the river by its side, he felt that

Life flowed unrealisingly in its Present and that it was only Memory that gave Life its greatest moments.

§

Nemiah took his party up the headland behind the Quay and passed along the road quite near and yet high above the little cottage David had slept in. They went to the little fort which faced seawards, and its three old cannon, bereft of their rotted wooden carriages, lay inertly in the walled embrasures. David's father, when a boy, had played with them, for their carriages were intact then. A small powder-house was built near the safer side of the Fort. This was vaulted in brick and was in two compartments, one to house the garrison and the other to hold the ammunition.

The erection had taken place after the pirate ship, the *Black Prince*, had put into the bay in 1779 and demanded 2,000 guineas or the clergyman of the parish (probably as a hostage). Because both were refused, the pirate fired cannon ball into the town for a whole day, but the damage inflicted on the town was but little. The volunteers under the command of Capt. Harries got ready to obstruct any landing, but the most useful combatant proved to be a smuggler. He brought a small piece of ordnance to the rocky shore and used it with such effect that the pirate cleared off before the following morning.

So the little fort was built and equipped with a battery of eight nine-pounder guns. The invasion of 1797 found it with Woolwich bombardiers and practically no ammunition. The bollards on the quay testified to the use of four of the guns for mooring ships to the quay wall.

The party then went further along the rocky coast and David saw the kestrels rising from their rocky nesting places. With its upper parts of chestnut colour and tawny under-parts, the bird was called "Y Curyll Coch" (the Red Hawk) and the female was larger than the male. Its cry was like the mewing of a cat.

As they went along, the two smaller boys went chasing butterflies. They were chiefly of the large and small brown variety—"large heath" and "small heath." David felt himself superior to this now, but got excited as he saw a Clifton blue butterfly. He had seen plenty of brown butterflies at Gorlan, and even Peacock and Red Admiral butterflies at Rhyd-y-pant—but never a blue one.

As they walked along, a large bird with broad wings passed swiftly, but with no apparent effort, along the shore. Nemiah nodded a query to David, who could not answer. "Heron," said Nemiah, "the lone fisher of the shallows."

As they looked out to the sea, a black object appeared on the waves some distance away. Again Nemiah pointed and nodded his query, but David did not know.

"The common seal," said Nemiah, "the fisher in deep waters."

A fisherman passed them just then and Nemiah hailed him as an old friend and asked him if the seals were doing much damage

to the fishing in the bay. The smaller boys drew within earshot.

"Oh, yes," was the answer, "and if we could kill them all off so much the better. They break our nets and eat an enormous quantity of fish."

He turned and looked at the three boys.

"Would you like to hear a true story?" he asked.

All three boys readily agreed.

"I was coming along here early last December, just as you are going along now, when I met a boy rushing to meet me. He was very excited. 'A baby,' he said, 'there's a baby down there on the cliff, and it's crying for its mother!' So I went with him and true enough, just above the tide and on a small ledge was a white moving object crying piteously. It looked and sounded just like a baby.

"So down I went and when I got there, I found that it was a late-born baby seal put there for safety from the rough weather by its mother."

"Did you tumble it back into the water?" asked David.

"Oh, no!" was the reply, "I thought to myself, 'This is one of our enemies. Before I kill it, I'll take it home to show.'"

The boys looked disappointed at this and he went on.

"It was about twenty inches long and I tried to pick it up by its skin like I would a cat or a dog, but the skin was too tight around the body. So I lifted it up in my arms and with great difficulty I clambered to the top of the cliff. The little thing was as vicious and as restless as could be, as I sat down to rest on the top of the cliff.

"Then I began to be sorry for the little thing"—the boys' eyes brightened—"and I was fool enough to carry it down the cliff again. I jumped on to a rock about three feet wide which had the water all around it. Then I lowered it into the water and it began swimming around the rock I was on.

"After leaving it go, I said to myself, 'You are a prize fool to leave this future net-breaker go like this,' and I tried to catch it again. This was in vain and my eyes followed the little chap swimming around the rock.

"Then I had a shock. Suddenly something from underneath the water caught hold of it and drew it out of sight. I had been a 'watcher watched' evidently. Looking out to sea, I saw the little seal brought to the surface by its mother a hundred yards away. Then they both disappeared and I didn't see them again."

Nemiah pointed to the black head in the water and said :

"Perhaps that's the one you had."

"Perhaps," was the reply, "and he's getting ready to break up our nets again."

Shaking his head with solemn regret, the fisherman went on his way.

As they returned they met a party of young men, all wearing white hats and carrying walking sticks. There was no mistaking

them—they were young men on holiday from the mining valleys—the *Shonies*. Nemiah greeted them and they responded cheerfully.

They held sing-songs on the mound above the Slade during the evenings. They made no charge or collection and the Abergwaun natives would congregate to hear their good voices.

One serious complaint they had against Abergwaun—it was the cold iron seats of Pen Slade! Colliers who work in hot places detest cold contacts, and those seats were really cold during the evenings.

They were young men in their early twenties who were well dressed. As David looked at their uniform kinds of attire, he assessed their value—white linen quilted hat, 3s. od.; white cricket shirt, 4s. 6d.; knitted silk tie with broad ends, 1s. 6d.; braces, fancy pattern, 1s. 6d.; coloured belt of elastic type, 1s. od.; and walking stick, 1s. od. They had left off wearing their waist-coats. The whole group appeared to be of a good type of young collier who had money to use wisely and some to spare.

One of them asked Nemiah:

“How do we get to see the Needle Rock?”

This was a high-standing rock close inshore with water all round it, and pierced at the water level with a hole through which a boat could just pass. Nemiah replied: “It’s some distance along here; but why not see it and the rocky coast from a boat?”

“Good idea,” was the reply, “but how do we get a boat? Some of us have learnt to row at Barry Island.”

“Well,” said Nemiah, “as I came down the Cwm this morning I met the owner of three or four boats which are tied to the Quay. I made an arrangement with him to hire a boat whenever I wanted one and pay him a shilling a day for its use. There’s no mistaking his boats, they are all painted white.”

“Will you come with us?” was the answer. With that blue mark on your face we know you to be a Shoni like ourselves, although you speak Bible Welsh with an Abergwaun accent.”

Nemiah smiled. “All right,” he said, “we’ll go this afternoon, but we shall require two boats to carry us. Shall we meet at the Quay at two o’clock?”

“Good enough, Shoni Abergwaun,” was the reply, “we shall be very glad of your company. We are all strangers to this place and we only arrived last Saturday.”

Nemiah and his wife had thought of calling on relatives that afternoon, but with the water in the bay like a mill-pond and the sun shining, it was ideal for a boat trip.

At the appointed time they appeared, carrying paper bags containing buns, and Abergwaun buns were really delicious.

Nemiah and the leader had a confabulation. It was decided that Nemiah’s party and four of the others should go into the leading boat and the remaining eight go into a second boat. This latter proved to be somewhat larger than the first and the Shonies with much pantomime of fun settled down to four oars in each boat.

Nemiah and the leader took charge of the respective tillers. The latter was asked if he thought that he could "keep this tram on the rails."

They rounded the quay wall with much laughter as two amateur rowers "caught crabs."

Nemiah shouted out the names of various little coves and indicated how the colour of the gravel differed in them. One might have a golden gravel, while another would have a grey gravel.

They got to the Needle Rock without mishap and then the Shonies wanted to row through the eye of the Needle. Nemiah told them they would have to give the boat momentum and ship oars just before reaching the orifice, but added that he was afraid that the larger boat would not get through. He was told to lead the way and he skilfully steered his boat through.

The other insisted on following, and, as Nemiah feared, they got stuck. This set its crew going. One wailed in a fine tenor voice a song then popular because of the South African War :

"Oh, break the news to mother !
And tell her how I love her
For I'm not coming home !"

Another said, "Mam fach, you were right when you told me never to leave home !"

One shouted to his butty (mate) in Nemiah's boat : "Dai, I forgive you that 'alf-a-crown you owe me if you will tell them at 'ome that I died like a South African 'ero !"

One called out to Nemiah, "You'd better get the Abergwaun life-boat out at once unless you want to spend time at an inquest !

Another said : "Jawch, they'll have to close the Glofa Pit now. They'll never keep it going without us !"

Then their banter was levelled at the leader of the tiller, who also led them in their singing parties.

"Call yourself a conductor ! Why you can't conduct a little boat like this through a great big hole in this here rock !"

"Well," was the reply, "I'll have to find you boys bigger darning needles next time !"

Nemiah and his party enjoyed these sallies greatly, and the former knew that he would spoil their fun if he intervened to help them too quickly. This was one of their great pleasures, to get hold of a burlesque incident which would stand regaling to the listeners in their pit for a long time.

Their boat was only stuck by being somewhat diagonal in the opening. At length he told them to weight their boat on one side of the rocky orifice and use their oars as thrusting poles on the sides and go through. This they did and were immensely pleased that they had actually passed through the Needle Rock.

The two boats then drew together, oars were shipped, while smokes and buns were passed around. The banter and chaff continued, for they were all in high good humour. The Shonies

felt that they had found a counsellor and friend in Nemiah, so he was asked :

"Look here, Shoni Abergwaun, we want to go to see the spot on which the French landed many years ago. How can we manage it?"

Nemiah considered for a while and said :

"It's some distance away ; I suggest that you get a horse brake and the driver will surely know the way."

"Well, look here," said the leader, "Will you come with us and we'll hire two horse brakes and have a picnic there ? We shall be glad to have you as guide."

After consulting his wife and David, Nemiah agreed and the following Monday was settled on.

The afternoon was still young, so they decided to row across the bay and inspect the construction of the new port works.

There the parties had to keep their wits about them for a small steam engine shunting waggons containing excavated rock was fussing back and fro along the levelled portion of the rock. They saw some huge concrete blocks being made and others being lowered into position on the breakwater by means of large travelling steam cranes.

They were also shown the rock drillers at work and this interested the colliers greatly. Drilling in the coal headings was developing in those days.

A tunnel in the rock also attracted attention, and in this, two-and-a-half tons of black explosive powder was being placed. The big blast from it took place about a week later, when 30,000 tons of rock was dislodged by it. Several pieces of the rock disturbed were about the size of a small house and the noise of the explosion was heard for many miles around.

Nemiah and his party were entertained to tea in the adjoining village of Goedwig by the Shonies who were loud in their praises of Nemiah as a guide.

They rowed back across the bay in the cool of the evening and the beautiful stretch of encircling coast line had a wonderful charm for David. Singing their songs to the rhythm of the oars, the two boats returned to the Quay where David found an anxious aunt waiting his return.

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The following morning the sleepy David was roused at an early hour, for fishing was to be the chief topic of the day. When he got out on the Quay, he found Nemiah and two of the Shonies in rough and borrowed garb, all in readiness. The latter were originally from some fishing village in South Carmarthenshire, and when Nemiah told them the night before of the morning's fishing, they insisted on joining the expedition. This was taking them back to their boyhood days, and they revelled at the thought of it.

Old Cradoc Bowen was well pleased when he saw them, for the remainder of his crew were an oldish man and two middle-aged women.

A large boat was manned, the seine net lowered down into the boat in such a manner that it would uncoil itself easily, and Cradoc Bowen took the tiller and command. David was told to sit by him and be out of the way of the nets and rope.

They reached Twll y Sân, where someone dropped on his feet in the water and secured a rope to an upstanding piece of rock. To this rope the net was attached and the boat was then rowed and steered into a semi-circle around the shore. The net which had corks attached on one edge and pieces of lead on the other, was lowered into this semi-circle. The boat was then beached and all but David and his grandfather got out, some on to rocks, others into the water, taking the other rope end of the net with them.

This they began to haul and brought in some fish on to the little beach of pebbles.

The process was repeated several times until quite a pile of fish appeared on the beach. These varied a great deal—flat-fish, soles, herring, mackerel, and other types. Only one salmon was caught and this was to go to the Plas, which seemed to have a standing order for all the salmon caught there.

The fish were then put into the boat and taken to the Quay, where salesmanship was soon in progress. The money was then divided amongst the helpers (Nemiah and the two miners refusing payment except in the form of a fish each) and the shareholders of the net.

The net was then hauled up to the Quay, repairs being carried out in the process by a helper and David's aunt, and put up on the parapet wall to dry.

The morning's fishing was over !

During the afternoon and evening Nemiah busied himself with the widow's affairs, while he and his wife also called on relatives. The boys were given the free run of the town, and they did full justice to their freedom. The shops with all kinds of fishing tackle and toy yachts were a complete novelty to them.

CHAPTER XI

CRADOC BOWEN—SURVIVING “DAUGHTER” OF REBECCA

And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her : Thou art our sister ; be thou the mother of thousands of millions : and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.—Gen. 24, 60.

IT seems a far cry from the petrol tax to the destruction of toll gates in Wales by the Rebecca Rioters of 1843. Yet the few existing toll-gates indicate that the old form of paying for the use of roads has not been completely eradicated by newer forms of payment.

Cradoc Bowen was one of the very few survivors who had taken part in the Riots at Abergwaun in 1843, but Nemiah was not depending on the old man’s memory to get all the information he desired.

So Thursday morning found him contacting the local historian, a retired old gentleman who revelled in the past history of Abergwaun. From him and his records Nemiah found the following facts.

The riots against the payment of tolls started on the borders of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, and spread through the two counties and into Cardiganshire. The movement was found in active form through the counties of Glamorgan, Monmouth, Radnor and, to a lesser degree, in some of the North Wales counties. It was, however, essentially a South Wales movement.

A succession of two wet unproductive harvests brought the farming industry to a bad state, and farmers had to buy corn for their own sustenance. The market values of their produce also fell considerably, although costs were maintained and even increased. Beasts worth £10 each would fetch only £6, and butter worth 1s. od. per lb. only 6d.

There was also mismanagement of the funds applicable to the turnpike roads, the frequency and the amounts of the tolls, and, in some cases, the vexatious conduct of the toll collectors and the illegal demands made by them. The contractors controlling the toll-gates were generally English-speaking, and the ignorance of that language by the toll-payers was taken advantage of by toll-keepers who made unlawful exaction of tolls. Strangers who took up toll-gates as professional toll-renters exercised strict tolls, whereas previous toll-renters had given credit and compounded the tolls into easier terms.

Although tolls were paid, the toll-renters did not repair the roads as a general rule, and that expense had to be met by the

parishes. It would appear that the tolls were for constructing or re-constructing the roads and for the maintenance of the toll-gate and toll-houses. There was no objection to the gates on the Queen's high road, but to others which were being repaired by the parishes.

Added to this, the Tithe Commutation Act had increased the farmers' burdens. It had, in some cases, even doubled or trebled the tithe payments, while the change from payment in kind to payment in money had not helped matters. Rates and taxes were also increased, and the hard-working frugal-living Welsh farmers and their families found themselves quite unable to meet their obligations.

The disturbance originated with the erection of gates on an eight-mile length of road which had been free of gates and tolls. The populace pulled them down and the magistrates would not agree to their re-erection. No one was punished for this act.

In Carmarthenshire eleven tolls were exacted on a nineteen-mile length of road and this was apart from additional tolls on the bye-roads.

The term "Rebecca" claims two origins. The first is the Bible quotation which heads this chapter. The second is relative to the first leader—Thomas Rees, of Carnabuith, Manachlogddu in Pembrokeshire. He was thirty-six years of age, of large proportions, strong, and a noted pugilist. When a woman's disguise was sought for him it was only the garments of a tall and stout spinster named "Rebecca" that could be found to accommodate him.

For a religious-minded, Bible-reading people, the first origin appears to be natural, but possibly both played their parts in naming a movement which did much to clear away some of the injustices of that period.

It will be observed that it was the farmer class, the small capitalist, who found his burdens unbearable, and not the labour element of that period, the farm labourer who earned about seven shillings a week. Yet all must have joined in, feeling that the entire agrarian industry was involved.

The movement was supported by men of good standing, and a barrister, Mr. Lloyd Hall, Newcastle-Emllyn, a spirited advocate of civil and religious liberty, helped considerably. He would not countenance the riotous proceedings, but stood up for the movement in a most staunch manner otherwise.

In view of the serious nature of the disturbances, another Mr. Hall, chief magistrate of Bow Street Police Office, accompanied by one or two other legal gentlemen, left London for Wales by the direction of the Government. This was at the end of July, 1843, and the subsequent report of his commission was published in March, 1844. So this Inquiry was in process while the riots were still very active.

With this information, Nemiah and the historian met Cradoc Bowen and David on the Square about two o’clock and prevailed on the owner of the milk-cart to drive them to the scene of the old man’s exploits.

When they all arrived at the road-fork about one-third of a mile from the Square, they all got out of the milk-cart, the driver of which would accept no reward.

“ Now where was the gate standing, Cradoc Bowen ? ” asked Nemiah ; “ or were there two gates—one on each fork ? I see that the old toll-house is still standing.”

Cradoc Bowen hobbled around with his stick and reached a point opposite the east end of the toll-house. He said :

“ This is where the gate stood—here on the road to Haverford-west ; there was no gate on the other road. The gate was here until about ten years ago. To avoid payment of toll, I remember how this boy’s other grandfather used to put up his little donkey and cart at the buildings here, and walk into town to see his daughter and my son after they got married. So that it took old ’Becca about fifty years to clear this gate away. But I’ve lived to see it cleared away altogether; and a good job that is.”

“ It is,” said Nemiah, “ but tell us how it happened.”

“ Well, Nemiah,” said the old man, “ I was about twenty years of age then, the age when you don’t care a d—for anything, and I had a friend with me of the same age.

“ It was some Friday in September, 1843, that we got word of what was to come off at this very spot late that night ; so we decided to have our share in the riot. We didn’t have women’s clothes, so we blackened our faces well and tied cabbage leaves around our heads. Then we put our shirts over our other clothes. Some of the others wore their coats inside out.

“ We were in a gang of fifty or so when we arrived here at midnight. Some had tools and some had guns, but all were disguised and ’Becca was on horseback. ‘ She ’ got off and went up to the gate and asked some questions and we gave the answers. I forget now what they were.”

The historian took out a book and said :

“ Listen to this, Cradoc Bowen, and tell me if it is something like what you heard, for this is the record of what happened near St. Clears on April 7th of that year.

* “ Rebecca, leaning on her staff, hobbled up to the gate and seemed greatly surprised that her progress along the road should be interrupted.

‘ Children,’ said she, feeling the gate with her staff, ‘ there is something put up here. I cannot go on.’

Daughters : ‘ What is it, mother ? Nothing should stop your way.’

Rebecca : ‘ I do not know, children. I am old, and cannot see well.’

* Extract from “ *Rebecca and Her Daughters*. ”

Daughters : ‘ Shall we come on, mother, and move it out of the way ? ’

Rebecca : ‘ Stop ; let me see (feeling the gate with her staff). It seems a great gate put across the road to stop your old mother.’

Daughters : ‘ We will break it, mother. Nothing shall hinder you on your journey.’

Rebecca : ‘ No ; let us see, perhaps it will open (feeling the lock). No, children. It is bolted and locked, and I cannot go on. What is to be done ? ’

Daughters : ‘ It must be taken down, mother, because you and your children must pass.’

Rebecca : ‘ Off with it, then, my dear children. It has no business here.’ ”

“ What do you say to that, Cradoc Bowen ? ” asked the historian.

“ I don’t remember all of that ceremony, either,” was the reply, “ and our ’Becca’s language wasn’t so polite as that.

“ Anyway, our ’Becca told her children to first fire a volley and then to break down the gates. This was done in a short time, for with saws, hammers, hatchets and crowbars we worked in relays ; when one man got ‘ out of puff ’ another would take his place, and it was soon down. By this time great numbers of the inhabitants were watching us.”

“ Did you take down the toll-house ? ” asked the historian, evidently checking up on the old man’s statements.

“ No,” was the answer, “ Not that night ; but we told the toll-keeper not to levy any more tolls.

“ Then we marched through the town like a lot of soldiers. Some who had seen it said that we marched as well as the French army when they came down Goedwig Hill to surrender about fifty years before that.”

“ You didn’t see that, Cradoc Bowen ! ” Nemiah remarked jocularly. The old man cackled with laughter.

“ No,” he said, “ that was about twenty-six years before I was born ; but you mustn’t interrupt me in my story, Nemiah John. Let me see now, where was I ? ”

“ Marching through Abergwaun,” said the historian, “ but where to ? ”

“ To the Parc-y-Morfa gate on the Newport side of the town, of course,” was the reply, “ and we soon destroyed that gate as well.”

“ But you didn’t stop at that,” said the historian.

“ No,” was the reply, “ we were told that the toll-keepers still levied tolls. So on the following Monday (September 11th), night, we returned there about eighty strong, marching in good order with ’Becca on horseback leading the way. We went to the Parc-y-Morfa gate first that night and after telling the toll-keeper to clear out his furniture, we pulled the toll-house down in half-an-hour. Then we marched back to the Abergwaun gate

and gave the toll-keeper one hour to clear out all his things. This he did within the hour—every stick of it, and we pulled that one down, too.

“ We were in good trim that night, so we went off to the house of the Surveyor of Roads. There we pulled down the wall he had built to enclose a part of the common and doing great injury to his property.

“ By this time, the dawn was breaking, so we told the people in that part that we would be there later to pull down more walls which encroached upon the common. We were armed and kept up a regular fire to frighten off would-be intruders to our work, and we were all disguised.”

“ But what good did you do in Abergwaun ? ” asked the historian, pointing to the existing old toll-house. “ That was put up immediately after, and on the day that the road surveyor was giving evidence before the Commission (November 16th, 1843) the gates had been re-erected and the collection of tolls re-started that day.”

“ Well,” said the old man, “ I’m getting tired standing here, and thirsty as well. What about going into this inn for a smoke, a sit-down and a drink ? ”

Nemiah laughed. “ All right, old warrior,” he said, “ We’ll get you a pint and then we want to know how you managed to dodge the police and the soldiers after the event.”

The old man laughed and led the way into the adjacent inn, where, with his tankard in front of him, he re-commenced his story.

“ Unlike nearly all other places,” he said, “ we had some dirty traitors in our midst. A husband and wife, who knew us well, gave the names of those concerned to the police on November 7th, 1843. The result was that about thirty of us were taken into custody by the London police and a troop of dragoons. Those arrested were brought before a full bench of magistrates at the *Commercial*. ”

“ But you weren’t one of them,” said Nemiah.

“ No fear,” was the reply. “ I was courting a girl at an inn in Goedwig at the time, and while they were searching for me, I was hiding in a cellar of the inn. Oh ! no, Cradoc y Felin was too smart for those English policemen ! ” The old man laughed at the memory of it. (His name of Cradoc y Felin came from his one time tenancy of a mill in “ Lower Town.”)

The historian took up the story. He said :

“ As the result of that capture, William Owen (the lady Rebecca), James Gwynne, and Thomas Gwynne were committed to the next assizes at Haverfordwest. But, here you will note a certain leniency, they were not kept in jail, but allowed bail of £100 each and two sureties of £50 each. The remaining twenty-three were each allowed £50 bail and two sureties of £25 each. As far as I can find out their case did not come off until the following March (1844) and then they were let off.

"The joke of it is that the two informers got jail! The local feeling against them was so strong that the police had to guard them and eventually they were sent for their own safety to the jail at Haverfordwest!"

Nemiah said, "The men charged were luckier than others, for the penalty for destroying a toll-house with gates (worth then about £100) was transportation to Botany Bay in Australia for life."

The historian nodded agreement and added :

"Yes, especially when they went outside the business of the toll-gates, as many of them did. Some of them were no better than ruffians, terrorists and hooligans, and it is a great pity that the genuine grievances of good people generally bring in this type of odious assistance.

"Such desperadoes intimidated innocent people to give them money and deserved all the punishment they got. When Rebecca extended her activities to apply justice which was simply injustice the movement lost a lot of sympathy.

"On December 26th, 1843, at the Carmarthen Assizes, *John Jones* (Shoni Scubor fawr) was indicted for shooting Walter Rees and shooting at a Miss Slocombe, and for destroying three houses. His sentence was transportation for life. *David Davies* (Dai'r Cantwr) was tried for a riot in Coal-brook Works and Spudder's Bridge. He was given transportation for twenty years."

"Now will you answer your own question," said Nemiah—
"What good came of it?"

"Oh, quite a lot," said the historian. "An '*Act to Consolidate and Amend the Laws Relating to Turnpike Trusts in South Wales*' was passed on August 9th, 1844. This made for great improvement in highway law and cleared away some toll-gates and many injustices. It did away with many tolls and brought other tolls to a fairer basis."

"So the lady Rebecca was justified after all?" asked Nemiah.

"I think so," was the reply of the historian.

"One thing more," said Nemiah, "were any re-erected gates taken down by the rioters?"

"Most certainly," was the reply, "and more than once. In one case iron pillars replaced the wooden gate posts and the gate strengthened with iron. When the rioters found that they made for the local smith-shop and roused the smith. He threw them the keys of the shop from his bedroom window, and, with the use of his tools, they demolished the re-erected gate and posts.

"I remember this gate in operation, of course. It was a grand sight to see the gate-keeper rush to open the gate when he heard the trumpet of the mail-coach sounding; and to see the mail-coach and horses going at a spanking pace through it. It was wide enough for that."

Cradoc Bowen settled down comfortably in the inn parlour, and pulled out a short clay pipe. The historian had brought the old man his pint of beer and a large glass for himself. This latter measure was a little more than half-a-pint and was termed a “sleever.” He paid threepence for Cradoc Bowen’s pint and twopence for his own. Nemiah bought two lemonades for David and himself for which he paid three-half-pence each.

The historian passed his tobacco pouch to the old man who filled his pipe, lit it, took a draught from his tankard and turned to David.

“ We’ll have to look at the soles of your boots when we get back,” he said, and laughed as David coloured.

“ What’s this about ? ” asked the historian, sensing a joke.

“ Oh ! ” was the reply, between puffs of an evidently much enjoyed smoke. “ I went to Gorlan when David here was a little nipper of about five years of age. When I arrived at my son’s house, there was only Naomi and her smaller children there ; she was very busy and not at all pleased to see me. They were then living near the Gorlan Square, so I told Naomi that I would slip to the Gorlan Hotel for a pint until my son and the children came back for their meal.

“ When David arrived home, his mother told him that I had arrived and where I was. Before she could stop him, he ran to his old Da’cu in the public-house, and right glad I was to see him.

“ Naomi had a shock when she heard this and told David that the threshold of the public-house was badly worn by the boots of those who went into it, and that all those who went found that the nails in their boots had dropped out ! He must be like his dad and not like his old Da’cu, and never enter a public-house ! ”

David remembered this incident very well. He could imagine that he still saw the old man sitting on a form by the window, his tankard in front of him, the sawdust on the floor and in the several spittoons which were distributed about the floor. The homely little inn in which they now sat was very different from the large Gorlan Hotel with its spacious accommodation.

The old man laughed at the remembrance of the incident and of what was involved. Nemiah said :

“ Good for Naomi ; but you don’t know what happened a few years afterwards when David was ‘ carrying out ’ for a butcher.

“ One Saturday morning, the butcher placed some meat in a basket and told David to take it to the Clarence Hotel. David didn’t stir, so the butcher told him the second time. Still there was no attempt to carry out the orders given. Then the butcher realised that David, who was a member of the Band of Hope, objected to going into the hotel.

“ ‘ Well,’ said the butcher, ‘ if you don’t take this errand, you must take the “ sack.” ’ But still the boy didn’t go, and the butcher’s grown-up daughter had to take the meat, much to her disgust at having to do an errand boy’s job.

"The butcher told his mother about it and his opinion of David went up enormously. Here was a small lad who would stick to his convictions, and from that day he himself never called at the Clarence for his order—or the pint he felt that he must buy in doing so. David didn't get the sack."

"Well, Cradoc Bowen," said the historian, "this boy is a chip of the old block, and he would have made a good 'daughter' of Rebecca. I said 'good,' for you, you old reprobate, were probably only in the movement for the sake of enjoying the desperado side of it. Well, have another pint, for I'm very glad to know what you have told us."

Nemiah said quietly to the historian :

"I don't think that you are quite fair to the old chap in saying that. The resentment to injustice is very strong in his son Thomas—this boy's father. It is also in the boy, and they must have inherited it from the old chap."

When they left, the historian suggested that they should go to the Commercial Inn to see where the magistrates tried the rioters. "And where you should have been, you old 'De Wet,'" he added, addressing Cradoc Bowen jocularly.

De Wet was the most elusive of the Boer generals who was evading capture by Kitchener at that time in the South African war.

When they came out of the Commercial, who should they bump into but a few of the Shonies who seemed to be wandering aimlessly about.

"Well, Shoni Abergwaun, mun," said the leader addressing Nemiah, "you're the very man we want to see. Can you suggest a trip for us tomorrow, Friday? We enjoyed that boat trip with you so much, that we would like you to give us another."

Nemiah became thoughtful. He was only too ready to help them and to give his own party a trip; but he was there primarily to help the weaver's widow. Eventually he seemed to have solved his problem. Turning to Cradoc Bowen, he said :

"Look here, why can't we go to Cwm-yr-Eglwys to see the old ruined church of St. Brychan and show David here the sea-wall you and his father and uncle built in 1882. I could then call on a man who lives near there, whose son is a weaver now living at Pont Enfys selling yarn and flannel. The father is a weaver too, but too old now to take up a woollen mill. We could row out to Pwll-gwaelod and get bread and cheese, as much as we can eat at a penny per head, and walk along the little valley to the old church and wall."

"The very thing," said the leader, "but not so much of that bread and cheese! We're on holiday, and eat enough bread and cheese in the pits. You leave that to us—we'll find the 'doings.' "

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The following morning found the two boats going as before, but this time with Cradoc Bowen and two hampers in addition.

They passed the Needle Rock which brought forth much laughter as the previous experience was recounted, but with added touches of artistry, which were not exactly the truth.

They rowed for about three-and-a-half miles in a North-Easterly direction and landed at the beautiful little bay at Pwll-Gwaelod. Here many, including Nemiah, David and the two boys, bathed in water which warmed as the tide brought it in over the hot sand. A few of the Shonies swam well showing that, at one time, they probably lived near the sea. Public baths were few in those days.

By the time they were dressed, Mrs. John had spread out the contents of the hampers, lovely ham sandwiches and various kinds of cake, to which was added a pot of tea, bottles of lemonade and a pint of beer for Cradoc Bowen, all the additions being procured from the little inn there. They enjoyed their picnic meal immensely, but David's grandfather cast reminiscent eyes on the little inn. Nemiah watched him and smiled grimly. He knew that Thomas and Naomi Bowen had seen trouble as soon as they got married because of that little inn, or rather because Cradoc Bowen had spent time and money there.

The party saw the hampers safely away in one of the boats, and these were drawn well up beyond the tide-mark; they then made their way to Cwm-yr-Eglwys. They walked along a valley with steeply sloping sides, and David ventured to say that the sea must have flowed through that valley at one time. Nemiah agreed and said that the headland they were cutting across was called an island (*Ynys Dinas*).

They reached the sea on the other side, and here again was a lovely little bay, with a few houses on its shore. The ruins of an old church were indicated by a lone end (with belfry) standing in an old graveyard. So the church must have been built after the narrow strait had become dry land. But the sea changed its mind and wanted to repossess its ancient way, and began to eat away the church and the graveyard. A stout wall had been effectually built to check its career.

Nemiah and David helped the old man on to the beach for they had questions to ask him about the wall. The former was sorry that the local historian was not with them to give the history of the ruined church and graveyard.

The old man cast a professional glance over the wall which stood about nine feet above the sand.

“ Standing very well, isn't it,” he said, “ two walls built in succession previously had been washed away.”

“ Well how do you account for this one standing ? ” asked Nemiah.

“ Because I and my two sons built it,” said the old man, proudly. David was thrilled to hear this claim to family honour.

“ But tell us how,” said Nemiah, “ if David is to be a mason like his father and grandfather, he might as well start learning.

In fact, he has already built a dam for a bathing pool on the Gorlan River."

"Well done, David," said the old man ; "well, I'll tell you how we built this wall.

"First of all, I had to study the tides, and we dug the foundation at low tide. This was three feet deep and three feet thick and the excavation provided us with some stones for the wall and sand for the mortar."

"What lime did you use ?" asked Nemiah.

"Best Aberthaw, of course," was the reply, "because it sets in water and does not get dissolved in water like our local white lime. There was not much cement about in those days and if I had used the local white lime, this wall would not be here today."

"Where did you get all the stones from, Da'cu ?" asked David.

"Well, my boy, I had estimated to get half the stones we wanted on the beach here, and we did. Then we had to boat others from adjoining beaches and quarry some here, when they were easy to get at. The sand here is coarse, and with the lime it made a good strong mortar as you can see."

"What is the thickness of the wall above the toe foundation ?" asked Nemiah.

"Six feet," was the prompt reply, "and we lessened the thickness as we got higher and higher. You will see that there is a slope inwards on the outside, and there is a kind of reverse slope on the other side. Then we put that strong stone coping on the top of it."

"Were there skulls and bones from the graveyard on the beach like Mam said ?" asked David.

"Yes, plenty of them. The teeth in the skulls were perfect. Our old forefathers did not spoil their teeth with hot tea in those days," snorted the old man.

"And did my father collect them all and put them behind the wall ?" asked David.

"Yes, every one," was the reply.

"How many were you building this great wall ?" asked Nemiah.

"Me, my two sons, one other mason and a labourer," was the reply, "and some lodged in that little cottage there," pointing to a house on the West side of the bay.

"So you had stones and the sand for the mortar on the spot, most of the labour was your own, and you bought only the lime," said Nemiah.

Cradoc Bowen agreed, but he did not go into further details on the business side. Nemiah and David knew that the wall was financed by public subscription, and that the old man's estimate was quite good. They also knew that the wall had paid quite well but that as soon as Cradoc Bowen began drawing payment as the work proceeded his time was mostly spent in the little inn at Pwll Gwaelod. From there he would go to the wall and curse and swear at his hard-working little gang for not getting the wall

done faster. In one way, this was natural for when he was walling himself he could easily eclipse any one of them for output. His quick eye for the correct stone and his long strong arms made for good and rapid walling.

The real trouble, however, came to light after David's parents had got married and were facing family responsibilities. It was found that the old man had not paid for his Aberthaw lime, that the contract was taken under the name of “Cradoc Bowen and Sons,” and that the vendors had to sue for payment in the courts. Cradoc Bowen had not only drunk the profits but some of the costs as well!

His other son (also named David Peter) was under age, so that the brunt of the court payments fell on Thomas and Naomi Bowen. Naomi had bravely taken work from outside her new little home to find money to meet these demands. It was not surprising that she had but little regard for her father-in-law or for his record. It was the fear that David would become something like his grandfather that made her check his fiery temper, his resentful aggressiveness and natural fighting proclivities.

Nemiah went on his errand, and found that the old weaver and his wife desired to see their only son and his family back in the district. He also found that the son did not like his work at Pont Enfys, and that the old folk would help the son to take over the little woollen mill at Abergwaun. He got the son's address so that he could call there.

Later he contacted the man at Pont Enfys and found that he worked in a large store from which he and his master would sally forth to the pay Saturdays of the mining valleys. They took a horse and van around the streets on Saturdays and Mondays (while ready cash was available) and would sell stockings, underwear, wool for knitting stockings and lengths of flannel for shirts, etc.

The result of Nemiah's contact was that the little mill was taken on lease. As the new occupier had full knowledge of what the miners required and his master at Pont Enfys had given him standing orders for his product, the middle-man's profit went to help the weaver to make good at his new venture.

Nemiah rejoined the party, feeling hopeful and satisfied, and they all got back to Pwll Gwaelod. Here the old man insisted on having a reminiscent pint at the little inn. Then they all got into the boats and had a very happy journey back to the quay at Abergwaun.

CHAPTER XII

INVASIONS OF THE BRITISH ISLES, 1796-98

THE following day proved to be wet, but the Shonies' inclinations could not be discouraged. About noon the news was passing around the town that they would hold an eisteddfod at the Abergwaun court at two o'clock and that all local talent would be welcomed.

The Gorlan party turned up and found the leader of the Shonies sitting in the judge's seat with a lengthy list of competition items in front of him.

The Shonies provided most of the items, but when the conductor of the Eisteddfod found that two little National Eisteddfod winners were present, he promptly introduced the item of penillion singing. The boys sang and were rewarded with half-a-crown each, of which they were very proud.

Other items of songs and recitations were given, but the star item was the extempore sermon. About six Shonies left the room and were allowed to come back in turn. Each had to take his stand in the witness box. Then the text of the sermon was given them and the time allowed was five minutes. The text was : "Who killed Cock Robin ?" and they were to give the usual three heads for a sermon.

Two or three of them in their turn listened to the text as though stunned by a blow. Vainly each would try to marshal something to say, and their faces and their silence were most entertaining to the audience. They would end up in holding up a hand in mute despair and clatter down from the witness box. The conductor would punctuate the ascents and descents from the box with suitable humorous sallies.

Of the others, only one got really going, in fact they had a job to stop him. He repeated the text with mock solemnity—"Who killed Cock Robin ? Ah, my friends, this sad occasion brings tears to my eyes"

The conductor intervened. "It's not your tears we want, but the three heads of your sermon !" The victim shook his head sadly and went on :

"There is no need to go finding heads, Mister Conductor—they are in the text. The first is 'Who ?' the second is 'killed,' and the third is 'Cock Robin.' " Then followed a diatribe against "Who," the murderer—the sparrow who must have shot from a barrow ! "Killed" was then dealt with—the terrible act on a little dickie-bird ! "Cock Robin" brought him to a mock pathos with tones of appeal for the tears of sympathy for the victim, his wife and his children. He was going on to whether the family

were entitled to workmen's compensation when he was stopped ! His time was up !

Nemiah had been made adjudicator and there was no difficulty in making the award. The successful candidate was told to come forward for his prize which had been put into a cardboard box, neatly tied. He was told to open it so that the audience could appreciate how well he had been rewarded. This he did and the curiosity of the audience was soon followed by their loud laughter as he showed them—a potato !

So the afternoon and evening of a wet day were spent happily.

The following day was Sunday and after a dampish morning the better weather returned.

The Shonies and the Gorlanites were in the chapels that day and community singing of Welsh hymns on Penslade finished the day.

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The following day was fine and warm and the trip to the Pen Caer (Strumble Head) was to be the event of the day. Nemiah had insisted on the local historian accompanying them, and from him they had the following background to the French Invasion of 1797. Most history books make no mention of this important event.

The real background of the invasions (for there were three) is to be found in the French Revolution which had disposed of the monarchy and the ruling aristocrats and secured "government by the people for the people."

The working classes in this country were dissatisfied with their conditions and during the first half of the nineteenth century, this dissatisfaction broke out into the Rebecca and Chartist Riots, the Peterloo Massacre at Manchester (1819), the Industrial fight in Glamorganshire (1831) and other events.

The French Revolution was hailed by many in this country as the panacea for the agrarian and industrial ills from which we then suffered. Many went to France to investigate, including Welshmen such as David Williams, Caerphilly, and Morgan John Rees, Hengoed. The former even helped to draft the new French constitution.

Wales possessed at that time a band of cultured zealots who strove for the betterment of conditions ; their headquarters were in London. One of them was Iolo Morganwg, the "Bard of Liberty," as he signed himself with nonchalant defiance when he visited Winterbotham at Newgate where the latter had been imprisoned for preaching sedition.

Morgan John Rees, who had helped the Sunday School movement, a Baptist minister and a zealous reformer, was in Paris from the end of the summer of 1791 to the spring of 1792.

He returned to this country advocating the removal of the royalty and priesthood from the affairs of state. He was fervent in his reforming activities and most zealous and active in his work.

He was a writer of his time and published some denunciations of existing conditions. He left Wales for America in 1794, seeking that freedom which had been denied to others such as Winterbotham.

The leaders of the French Revolution sought wider spheres of influence and the neighbouring British Isles were within easy reach. Ireland, with its disaffection, appeared to be the easiest for their purpose and in December, 1796, a plan was put into action.

The result was that General Lazare Hoche (1768-97) launched a fleet of seventeen ships, including thirteen frigates, with 15,000 soldiers on board. This was in December, 1796, and he planned for the conquest of this country. Storms met this fleet, with the result that the bulk of it arrived in Bantry Bay in South-east Ireland, but without their leader or his ship. They were in British waters for about a fortnight without sighting a British man-of-war. But when the leader of the expedition got to Bantry Bay, he found that his fleet had returned to France without making a landing and he had no alternative but to follow after them. The fleet lost twelve ships through storms and mishaps by that venture.

In 1798 a landing was actually made on the North-east of Ireland, but the French force was routed. The Irish in both invasions had not proved so useful to the French as the latter had imagined.

The invasion of Wales on February 22nd, 1797, seems to have been associated with the plans for the invasion of Ireland during the previous December. In fact General Hoche's orders to Colonel Tate for this expedition were given in November, 1796. It was to distract the British Government with a view to landing another force of two legions in the counties of Northumberland, Durham and York. Nor was the landing in Wales so unimportant, for the plan behind it was somewhat ambitious.

The French troops stated that they expected to be seconded by another force, but this was probably conditional on their own success.

Colonel Tate, an Irish American, was given charge of the 1797 expedition. He had two frigates, a corvette and a lugger, with about 1,300 soldiers and their equipment on board. These were safely landed from Fishguard Bay on Wednesday, February 22nd, 1797, on to the rocky coast of Pen Caer (Strumble Head). He seems to have lost only one boat load of equipment, which was wrecked in the landing, but that boat may have carried some form of artillery. After landing the troops and equipment on Wednesday Colonel Tate gave the ships their clearance for he had no more use for them, and on Thursday, February 23rd they sailed away to Dublin harbour. Fearing pursuit by British ships they left Dublin on February 25th and made no further contact with the French force on Pen Caer. British ships intercepted them before they got safely to France, and two of them were captured. One was renamed "The Fishguard."

While in the Fishguard Bay, they could have cannoned the town and reduced it to ruins, but they evidently kept their ammunition for other purposes. The little fort with its eight nine-pounders was without much ammunition, but the landing was made some distance away from its possible menace.

Colonel Tate had for his force 600 men from prisons and 600 choice convicts from the galleys. The marks of the irons were on the wrists of the latter. The force was to "war on the mansion and make peace on the cottage." It was to create insurrection amongst the poorer classes. Looting was encouraged and possibly held out as an enticement to this force of convicts.

The instructions Colonel Tate received were to sail up the Bristol Channel and destroy Bristol by fire under cover of darkness. Bristol was then considered the third largest port in the British Isles. After that he was to get to a point below Cardiff and carry on his activities. From there he was to make for Chester and Liverpool. The latter city was to be his real objective and was the second largest port in this country. By the time he reached it, he was expected to be reinforced with a large number of insurgents. Liverpool, considered to be worth £5,000,000, was to be reduced to ashes. From this it will be seen that the venture to the northern counties of England (which did not come off—possibly owing to the failure of Colonel Tate's force) was quite logical in its strategical conception.

The purposes of Colonel Tate's invasion were : (1) Insurrection ; (2) to hamper commerce ; and (3) to facilitate descent on the country by distracting the attention of the British Government. Should he be frustrated in the Bristol Channel venture, he was to land his force in or near Cardigan Bay. The wind blowing from the east stopped the Bristol Channel venture, so he landed on the south side of Cardigan Bay as he had been directed. Liverpool and its destruction was probably still the main objective.

The country was somewhat scared by these invasions and the trouble with the Navy during 1797 did not help matters. Mutinies broke out in the British Fleet at Spithead and the Nore ; they were caused by too severe discipline, too little wages, and disputes about prize money.

Colonel Tate's invasion lasted only three days and then he surrendered to the smaller force of Welshmen. It will be seen how the idea of invading this country persisted with the French, for in 1803, Napoleon, with an army of 120,000 men and a flotilla of 2,000 sail were in readiness for this purpose at Boulogne. He evidently did not depend upon the insurrection of the inhabitants of these islands ! Those, too, were the days of Local Defence Volunteers, or Home Guard. So it will be seen that the Fishguard Invasion was no mere buccaneering venture, but a part of a serious plan of action against this country. With regard to insurrection, this was a complete failure. Possibly the belligerent Welsh felt that " Better the Devil you know than the Devil you don't know."

So Phillip of Spain in 1588, Napoleon and his associates from 1796 to 1803, and Hitler in 1940, all failed in their desire to invade and conquer the British Isles.

§

The two large brakes and their parties, together with refreshment in the shape of hampers of food and drink, made a four-mile journey to Pen Caer. On their way, near Llanwnda village and church, David saw some druidic stones again. These were comparatively small. David's mother had a friend on Pen Caer whom he had been told to visit and Nemiah also wished to see her.

The brakes were halted and the entire party and the refreshments were carried down to the rocky shore to what is known as the Carreg Gwastad Point. Here a rough stone had been erected and inscribed to commemorate the landing of the French. The sea-gulls screamed around the intruders of this solitude as others must have done on that fateful landing. Nemiah gathered them all around the stone and asked the historian to tell them the story of the landing. The latter pointed out to the bay and said :

"Four French ships had passed the St. David's Head flying British colours, but were identified as French vessels by a sharp-eyed old sailor. As soon as they came here they changed over to their own colours and captured a very small coaster."

"Where was the British Navy?" asked one of the miners.

"With too much to do elsewhere, and Nelson was calling for more frigates," was the answer. "Besides you do not stop rats going *into* a trap; what you do is to prevent them *coming out* of it!" The party laughed at this sally and their guide continued :

"The boats unloaded at the rocks below, and Colonel Tate sent out some of his men to that natural fort on the summit of the headland and took up a defensive position. The other soldiers, true to form, went looting for a radius of a few miles around. A Portuguese ship containing wine had been wrecked off this coast a short time before, and the inhabitants got hold of casks washed ashore and a distribution of wine throughout the neighbourhood took place."

"Jawch!" said a Shoni, "I thought they were all teetotallers here!"

"Not much tea in those days," was the reply, "but they were not 'wine-bibbers' either, or the French would not have found so much of it. Wine is a national drink for them, and those convicts (of which most of the force was comprised) were delighted with what they found. They got drunk and insubordinate, and who knows but that Tate's army would have won their way but for that wine. The inhabitants fled before them, and the Frenchmen simply gorged themselves on the food they had found. After all, the fare of convicts is not too good!"

"Tate and his officers made Trehowel—the residence of a gentleman farmer just above us—their headquarters. To the left

of it you see Brestgarn where a Frenchman put a bullet through the clock-case, and you can still see it there.

"After the landing, Tate made a signal to the ships, and the comodore took his little fleet away. So although they were well armed, but without artillery, all retreat was cut off."

"What about our side?" was the query. "Where were our soldiers to have allowed the French to land?"

"Well, you can't have soldiers all around our coast," was the reply. "Lord Cawdor, the leader of our forces in this business, was informed of the landing while he was in bed in Haverfordwest about 11 o'clock on that same Wednesday night, February 22nd, 1797. He was the Captain of only about fifty men, but Lord Milford, the Lord Lieutenant, gave him complete command."

"On Thursday, forces were gathered from all over the County and all that they could muster was about 590 armed men. This was less than half the French force which local imagination and terror had probably increased to a greater number than they really were. Word was sent to adjoining counties for help, but that couldn't be expected for some days.

"Nevertheless, Lord Cawdor, with his scant force, closed in on Fishguard and took up the challenge of the French. He had no actual fighting experience, but had studied military tactics, and he handled the whole affair very well. It is said that a Captain William Davies, who had fought in the battle of Bunker's Hill in America, was probably the real strategist; but in any case, the responsibility lay with Lord Cawdor.

"Our force of 500 soldiers was assembled in Fishguard on Thursday night, some of them having marched thirty-five miles that day without any refreshment. Nevertheless, a force of our soldiers was moved into Pen Caer on the Thursday night, but by really good fortune withdrawn to the Fishguard-Manor Owen line."

The historian paused and pointed out the locations he was describing.

"What were the French doing, staying here instead of delivering a quick undercut?" asked a Shoni, obviously familiar with boxing terms.

"That is a good question," was the reply. "You will bear in mind that most of Tate's force was comprised of the scourings of the French prisons and that they were insubordinate. Added to that, Tate and his second-in-command, Le Brun, were at variance during the whole period and that all retreat was cut off, a rather demoralising feature of the business.

"Now Lord Cawdor and his officers had made their headquarters at the *Royal Oak* in Fishguard and the inhabitants in districts around were flocking in to help the soldiery. St. David's, where the first warning came from, got very active and stripped lead off the Cathedral roof to make bullets. Others got their scythe-sockets straightened and fixed them to long poles, while others mustered with some form of pikes. This rural kind of armoury was not

much use against trained soldiers with muskets and bayonets, as was found at the battle of Sedgemoor in 1685.

"At any rate, Lord Cawdor decided that he'd take up the offensive on the Friday ; but about nine o'clock of Thursday night, French officers turned up at his headquarters to negotiate terms of surrender, owing to symptoms of disorder in their army.

"Lord Cawdor took up a great bluff by stating that the French forces were well outnumbered and countered the conditional surrender offered by demanding unconditional surrender. Tate took all night to consider this, and by nine o'clock on Friday morning, Cawdor had the acceptance of his terms. The French force, with their muskets free of priming, were marched on to Goodwick sands where they were disarmed. They were in Haverfordwest by about midnight and were lodged in churches where they did much wanton damage. After seeing what sort of riff-raff they were, this country wanted them sent back to France."

"What about Tate ?" asked someone.

"Oh ! he and his officers stayed here at Trehowel while his troops surrendered. Later he was taken to London by Lord Cawdor, and the crowds who saw him on the way indicated a wish to cut his throat."

"What manner of man was he ?" was the further query.

"He was a tall, thin man, about sixty years of age," was the reply. "He was dressed in a long blue coat faced with scarlet ; his pantaloons were blue, his waistcoat white, while he wore a cocked hat with the national cockade. One account states that he knew no French—but this I doubt. However, he showed himself quite unsuitable to lead the expedition."

The historian stopped, although he could have given more details, but he felt that these would not interest his audience.

"You've made no mention of the women in their shawls or mantles and their steeple-topped hats, who helped Lord Cawdor to scare the French," said one of the party.

"No," was the answer, "because I can't find proof that they actually did so. There's no mention of them in Lord Cawdor's letters and dispatches, although he does give praise to his own forces and the people of the district. There's no doubt that women so attired were in the crowds on the Fishguard side of the Goodwick Sands, and they may have given the impression to the surrendering French that they were soldiers in uniform ; but there is no proof that they were put into ranks or marched about so as to appear as an endless stream of soldiery as one story has it ; or, that, according to another story, they were put in a row behind the soldiers in order to give the impression that there were twice as many soldiers as there really were."

"Yet these stories have persisted for a long time," said Nemiah, "and there may be some truth in them. After all, it's not always possible to prove actual occurrences."

"No, that's true," said the historian, "and two letters in

existence indicate that the women in the red shawls were referred to only three days after the French surrendered.

"A letter dated 27th February, 1797, from John and Mary Mathias of Narberth, in this county to their sister, states as follows. (Here he took out a note-book):

" . . . near four hundred Women in red flanes, and Squire Campbell (Lord Cawdor) went to ask them were they to fight, and they said they were . . . We had no more than about 400 men under arms and they thought the women to be a Ridgment of Souldiers and they 14 hundred . . . "

"Another letter of the same date from John Mends, Haverfordwest, to his son John, Surveyor of H.M. Customs at Gray's Inn, Essex, states as follows :

" There are several Causes assigned for their Surrender . . . and above all, about 400 poor women with Red flanel over their shoulders, which the French at a Distance took for Soldiers, as they appeared all Red."

" If I might advance what's purely surmise—I would put myself in the place of Lord Cawdor, and possibly Captain William Davies, the alleged strategist. Obviously, their force of actual soldiery was too small for an encounter and they couldn't expect more troops for at least a day or two. Then as the French were really the attacking force it was expected that they would advance on Fishguard where the few British forces were assembled on a defence line of a mile and a quarter long.

" If you work it out into one line for 600 men, you will find one man to about four yeards. Talk about the 'Thin Red Line' of Wellington's at Torres Vedras in Spain. Why, our red line here must have been a lot thinner.

" What the British leaders had to fall back on was bluff—sheer bluff, and in his answer to Tate, Lord Cawdor showed that he was not afraid of putting over a thumping big lie. He stated on February 23rd to Colonel Tate in writing :

" The Superiority of the Force under my Command, which is hourly increasing, must prevent my treating upon any terms short of your surrendering your whole Force Prisoners of War. I enter fully into your Wish of preventing an unnecessary effusion of Blood, which your speedy Surrender can alone prevent, and which will entitle you to that Consideration it is ever the Wish of British Troops to show an Enemy whose Numbers are inferior."

" The sight of those women in red shawls and tall hats may have given Cawdor or Davies an idea—to use the sight of the women as more bluff. As to the marching of the women around to make them appear to be an endless stream of soldiery, you have to remember that this could easily be done at the visible section hair-pin bend of road at the foot of the hill going down from Fishguard on to the Goodwick Sands. There is a steep footpath surrounded by trees there which cuts off the loop of the road bend

for the pedestrians. Along this path the women could go without being seen by the French.

"In view of the letters referred to and the persistent story about these women, I'm of the opinion that the strategists considered using them in the way I've described and consulted them as the one letter states. But the easy surrender of the French made this other piece of bluff quite unnecessary. This, of course, is only my own theory."

"And a very good one, too," said Nemiah. "Now what about Jemima Nicholas?"

"Well," was the reply, "here again we are without really authentic records; but, as you state, that is no proof that the incident of Jemima Nicholas *did not occur*. An account printed in Welsh in 1856 states that this Amazon of Fishguard, a woman of great strength and commanding presence, took a hay pike and went to seek adventure. She found about a dozen Frenchmen in a field and threatened them. The result was that she took them back to Fishguard and got them put into custody.

"Now if these were befuddled with wine and sick of the expedition, the guard of a woman with only a hay-pike was not without its advantages if they wanted to give in. Not only that, but they may have regarded themselves as deserters, and preferred the clemency of the Welsh to that of the French officers.

"This alleged occurrence must have been on the Thursday, and if a leader was required for the women on the Friday, who more suitable than Jemima Nicholas? Still, these are my own theories again."

"How many of the French were killed?" asked David.

"Just like a boy's question," said the historian with a laugh, "boys like to see their heroes ankle-deep in blood. Sorry to disappoint you, my boy, but from what I can find there were three Frenchmen killed, three were wounded and two died. Two Welshmen were killed and one wounded. These latter were not soldiers and in a skirmish between a few Welsh peasants (who were armed) and a small party of French soldiers, the Welshmen gave a good account of themselves."

"Thank you, very much," said the leader of the miners; "now we all want our lunch and you deserve a double share." So they fell to eating near the memorial stone of the Garreg Gwastad Point.

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After lunch, Nemiah left the miners to the more leisurely care of the historian, while he took his family and David to see Trehowel and the clock at Brestgarn.

Then he and David went in one direction to see Naomi's friend while Mrs. John and the boys made for Llanwnda to see some friends of Mrs. John's, who resided there.

Nemiah knew his way about very well. At a bend in a lane David stopped suddenly, for there in front of them was a picture

of much beauty. It was a single storey thatched cottage surrounded by a fringe of flowers. It was about thirty feet long and about twenty feet deep. The doorway was in the centre, one small window on each side of it and a square chimney at each end of the thatched roof. The walls were white-washed and made a pleasant background to the climbing roses around the doorway, and to the red, white and blue flowered holly-hocks and to the forget-me-not, sweet-smelling mignonette, marigolds and other flowers, all of which sent a fragrance in the direction of the visitors. Nemiah also stopped.

"What do you think of that picture, David," he asked quietly.

"Beautiful—is it not beautiful?" said the lad with ecstasy. "Why could we not have had houses like this in Gorlan instead of long rows of houses—all the same?"

Nemiah looked at the house with a rather grim look—and said, "Well, let us knock at the door, for here lives your mother's friend, Jane Evans."

A woman with a pale sweet face came to the door. She was poorly clad—but neat and clean. At the sight of Nemiah her rather wan face brightened and even more so when David was introduced as Naomi Bowen's son.

Now this visit proved to be important to David, for it affected his later career in many ways. He was observant and he never forgot Jane Evans and the pretty cottage in which she lived. Nor did he forget Nemiah's remarks concerning them.

She invited them in and placed the kettle on the fire immediately. It was a culm fire, made of balls of mortar-like culm, which was a mixture of fine anthracite coal and clay. The fire made but little soot and the back of the fireplace was white-washed. These fires kept in overnight.

While Nemiah and Jane Evans talked local news, David looked about him.

The front doorway entered on a form of passage, a light kind of partition on the right behind which lay the only bedroom or parlour-bedroom. It had a ceiling, for David could see a ladder in the passage for mounting to the floor above it. The partition with its doorway went no further than the floor level. He could just discern the shape of a bed there, for it had no window or roof-light.

The kitchen in which he sat was screened near the front door by means of a settle or *ffwrwm* and it had no ceiling. The floor was not paved like their kitchen at Gorlan but made of a mixture of earth and lime and trodden to a hard surface ; but it was uneven and the scanty furniture had bits of stone under some of the corners to keep them level. The walls were rough-daubed plaster-work and on them a few tradesmen's pictures and almanacs hung without frames.

A back door to the kitchen was approached by two steps and led to an out-house. Along the bottom of the kitchen wall on that

side the effects of penetrating damp were plainly visible, and even the floor on that side was damp as well.

The light from the little window was not much, but as whitewash had been applied wherever there was a suitable surface for it, this helped to light up the otherwise dark interior. It was obvious that but little sunshine could enter that little window, although it faced southwards.

The large open fireplace of the kitchen took up much room and a pantry was between its jamb and the back wall. With a bench for washing, a deal dresser and a cupboard bed, there was not much clear floor space.

David later found that all water had to be fetched (in all weathers) from a spring a hundred yards away, and that there was no form of lavatory whatsoever.

Jane Evans was laying the cloth on a round table with three legs to it. Nemiah told her that they had just had a good meal, but her Pembrokeshire hospitality would not be denied. She placed a saucepan on the fire and four eggs were placed in readiness for boiling.

Nemiah had already found that her husband, a farm labourer, was busy with the haymaking and would not be back until late. Her three children, two boys and girl, all in their teens, were living and working out on farms. He now asked her how she was in health, for she was much paler than when he had seen her about a dozen years before.

She hesitated and then said with an air of fine resignation, "I've caught 'the decline'" (tuberculosis), "Nemiah, and as you know, there's no cure for that. The doctor says that it's through living in this house—but doctors don't know everything."

"Is it very damp?" was the query.

"Yes, in winter, it's very damp," she replied, "but in the summer like this it's not too bad. That rain of Saturday brought a good deal of dripping water through the thatched roof. The owner is talking about taking off all the old thatch and covering it with zinc" (corrugated iron). "Good thatchers are becoming scarce now."

"The little cottage wouldn't look so nice as it does now," said Nemiah. "David here has fallen in love with it, especially your flowers."

"No, but then we wouldn't have the water dripping down on us almost everywhere in the house when we get steady rain," was the answer. "John and I would be glad to have it done; but as we pay only £3 a year in rent and it would cost the owner about £20 to do the roof, we cannot press on him to get it done. He says that he would gladly sell it to us for the £50 it cost his grandfather to build. He would throw in the land of it as well."

"The water comes in from the back wall as well when we get a fair amount of rain and it runs along the floor and out under the front door; but that can't be helped because the ground is higher

in the back. You can see that by the damp along the bottom of the back wall.

"So you like my flowers, David? They are a company and a joy to me as I'm here alone."

"Mam has some nasturtiums and mignonette like yours in boxes over our side garden door, Mrs. Evans," said David, "she also likes flowers."

"That reminds me," said Nemiah, taking a pound packet of tea from his pocket and giving it to her. "Naomi asked me to give you this with her kindest regards."

Jane Evans' eyes lit up with this little gesture of friendship from Naomi. Her eyes moistened a little and she said:

"Just like Naomi; I expect that she has enough to do without giving a two shilling a pound tea like this. She always was a good friend to me. Sometimes I feel that John and I ought to have followed her to the mines like you did, Nemiah. But I can't think of John going down those old pits, with their explosions and their accidents. Thank Naomi very kindly for me."

She put the tea on the mantel-shelf and busied herself with her tea-brewing, bread and butter cutting and those four eggs.

"Come now," she said, "you must want a cup of tea." She placed the lump sugar in their cups—plenty of it—but none for herself.

Nemiah and David valiantly ate their two eggs each and the nice thin bread and butter she had cut for them. She had no cake and apologised for this apparent lack of hospitality. Instead she gave David some bread and butter with brown sugar sprinkled over it.

Nemiah looked at her with sympathy. He did not like the wan look in her face, the grey eyes with their steady look, and the lips, once so full and open, now drawn into a set line.

"I don't like to hear about this decline of yours, Jane Evans," he said, "Can't you do something about it—shift from this house for instance, into a dry one?"

"There is no choice of houses about here, Nemiah," was the reply. "Another farmer offered John a job and a tied cottage and said that he would give him twelve shillings a week and his food and cottage. But that cottage was no better than the one we live in now. This cottage is very convenient to John's work and he has a good master. He earns sixteen shillings a week and he's allowed to plant enough potatoes in his master's field to keep us going all the year round. Even more, for we feed the pig with all the smaller sized potatoes. When there's a good harvest he gets a sack of oats for our chickens, and there's always something or other for feeding the pig. We've a large garden of our own and much of John's spare time goes into it. On Sunday poor John gets some rest; between chapel services he's able to read books which his master lends him."

"But what about you, Jane Evans?" persisted Nemiah.

" Well, I'm thankful to say that I'm the only one to catch the decline. John and the children are well, and we've taken care that the children are in good farm-houses and in places where they get enough to eat."

Her face shone with an inner radiance as she continued :

" Look what I've to thank God for ! I've been able to rear good children and put them on life's way and I shall probably live for a few years yet. Then I shall cross the old river of Jordan, meet my parents and all those dear lost ones, and then later, John and the children shall join me in our heavenly abode. We're only in this world for a short time, Nemiah, but in *tragwyddoldeb* (eternity) we shall be as happy children again around the throne of God."

" Escape ! Escape ! Escape !" said Nemiah to himself, " what would these poor people do without it." But he cheerfully agreed with her and strengthened the great solace of her soul. When they took their leave, a basket with two dozen clean fresh eggs was pressed upon them, a dozen for Naomi and a dozen for Nemiah. They could pack them and she would call at Nemiah's lodging for the basket later.

Nemiah was rather quiet when he left the white cottage. As they reached the bend from where they had first seen it, he stopped and looked back at it. He wanted David to begin realising the true facts of life, so he said :

" Do you still think it's beautiful, David ? That cottage is killing off a fine type of woman ; by good luck it's not killing off any more there as yet ; in many of these rural cottages whole families are being gradually brought to a state of ill-health and premature death. She was afraid for John to go down the pit, but she herself has gone down the pit of premature death in that cottage."

David was silent. He was too young to realise fully the whole significance of what Nemiah was saying ; but later in days of struggle and accomplishment, he never forgot that experience or Nemiah's words. They turned away. Nemiah continued : " You, David, saw a very pretty white-washed cottage, and like artists and others of artistic inclinations, you saw only what was skin-deep. I know these cottages, and as I looked at it now I could have called it a 'whited sepulchre.' Some day you may be building or designing houses, and I would like you to remember that the beauty of life within the house is far more important than the beauty of the house itself."

David's question was of a practical nature.

" Why do they whitewash these country cottages whereas we do not whitewash our houses in Gorlan ? "

" A lot of good whitewash would be on the outside of houses in Gorlan," was the reply. " The coal-dust would soon make it dirty and whitewash allowed to get dirty or neglected looks bad.

Besides, it costs money or labour to whitewash periodically, as John Evans has done his cottage."

Whitewashing walls was started or restarted in Wales in 1403 when the country suffered from a plague of insects. It is still regarded as a means of making places sweet and clean and is often demanded for that purpose.

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The whole party returned to Abergwaun in good humour. Nemiah's basket of eggs brought him the banter of the miners, who stated that he and David had been raiding the farmhouses like the French in 1797.

The following day Nemiah and his family returned to Gorlan. David and the party of miners insisted on seeing them off at the railway station, where they gave Nemiah and his wife some souvenir gifts of Abergwaun and loaded the two boys with sweets and bars of chocolate.

David and the miners returned on the following Saturday, and the latter proved to be most enjoyable company to the lad as far as Pont Enfys. Here they parted, but not before seeing that David was safely installed in the correct railway carriage for Gorlan ; or, as they termed it, "the proper horse-box of the Taff Vale Railway."

All had enjoyed their visit to the old town of Abergwaun immensely and, as we have seen, they had learnt a lot about the town and the district.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SCHOOL CONCERT

DAVID and Derfel found themselves learning the jokes they were to crack in the Darkie Minstrel troupe. These were made up by Mr. Davies, the Schoolmaster, who looked very fit after his return from "La Belle France"—as he called it. He rattled off some French sentences to the boys in order to watch their amazement at his cleverness ; but David and Derfel, who had received two years of French lessons from an excellent French mistress, were not impressed. In fact, they felt inclined to correct his pronunciation !

He also had a story suitable for boys and many others for adults, for he liked to consider himself as "a bit of a lad" who had just returned from "Gay Paree."

After explaining to the boys that *garcon* was the term for waiter, in Paris, he went on to state that many of them could speak English quite well. When one of his friends wanted him to order a meal, he had called on a waiter, "Gason ! Gason !" The waiter came up to him and said with a good English accent : "There's no gas in this establishment, sir, but the electric light will be switched on soon." Even the sophisticated David and Derfel enjoyed this story !

After working like a Trojan and losing his temper innumerable times, the schoolmaster launched the concert on a pay Saturday night at the Gorlan Hall during the middle of September. The tickets had been sold well by the schoolchildren.

Meanwhile, the threat of a strike because of the coal tax had passed, but other troubles loomed ahead. The middlemen of the coal industry were trying to depress the prices of coal and this would inevitably mean the reduction in the wages of the colliers.

Consequently, a coal strike appeared to be unavoidable when the concert was held. This suited the purpose of the concert, but the colliers, their wives, and the small tradesmen of the village, with the memory of the six months' strike of 1898 still with them, really dreaded another such experience. Conciliation was in progress that very day, but a complete deadlock had been reported to the village during the late afternoon. The Sliding Scale was moving slowly to its ultimate extinction.

As stated previously, the hall formed a part of the Gorlan Hotel, and apart from the chapels and their vestries, offered the only accommodation for such a concert. In fact, the chapels held their meetings there while their buildings were being enlarged or renovated.

Not only that, but with some incongruity, Tennyson Smith held the climax of his temperance week in the hall. The subject

of his special meeting was "The Trial of Alcohol." A bottle of spirits was placed in the dock and Tennyson Smith, in a lawyer's gown, took up the prosecution. The verdict, of course, was the full condemnation of the "prisoner at the bar," and its entire elimination from society. The tolerance of the landlord and landlady of the Gorlan Hotel was something to admire. Their customers expressed the view that it was much more than that of the advocates of temperance!

The ante-room of the hall, called "The Green Room" in those days, was entered from the hotel, and all those taking part in the concert were obliged to pass through the hotel premises to reach it.

David and Derfel passed through to the ante-room to find much preparation in progress. With the exception of wearing spectacles in the form of the fashionable *pince-nez* of the period, David was ready. He wore borrowed garb in the shape of long trousers and the schoolmaster's discarded college blazer, stick-up collar and a huge tie. He was the central figure of the troupe, the white man as the chairman of the darkies, and his name was "Mr. Johnson."

Derfel and the others of the troupe had to take off their coats and collars and don cotton jackets and trousers. These were of striped variety in different colours, white and red, white and blue, etc. Then some teachers blacked their faces and hands with burnt cork. There was no undue hurry about them, for they were to go on the stage as the last item of the show.

Other boys and girls were getting into the garbs for their respective parts, while the schoolmaster in his best raiment, fussed around looking all hot and bothered. As the choir came in, its members were sent on to their seats on the stage in order to be out of the way.

David noticed some boys and girls being assisted to wear boots and stockings on their hands and arms and he wondered what they could be doing.

The chairman of the evening was Dr. Edwards, and when he arrived in the ante-room, the schoolmaster met him and gave him the programme for the evening.

The doctor was of medium height, his hair and moustache turning white, and he carried himself with dignity. The village had a high respect for him. During the strike of 1898 he had not only attended to their ailments without fee, but contributed five pounds a week to the soup kitchen.

With the aid of only one assistant, he attended to the medical needs of these five thousand people. His great ability as a surgeon was most useful in Gorlan, where broken bones were simply matter-of-course events.

There were always two or three colliers moving about on crutches until the bones of their broken legs were healed, while others would have their broken arms in slings. One victim, a young man, was on his bed for the rest of his life, for his back was broken; this was even beyond the doctor's rare skill.

He was a very kindly man, but a disciplinarian. Before entering the medical profession and obtaining his "M.D." he had been a schoolmaster somewhere. When calling at the Bowen's house he liked to sit in the armchair by the window and talk to Naomi Bowen. Near his head as he sat would be the cane, hanging from the brass knob of the glass-topped cupboard in the recess. This he would take down with the remark "I see that you keep the 'Home Ruler' handy, Mrs. Bowen." He would then pull out a sharp pen-knife and proceed to trim off the frayed end with the skill of past experience.

He would allow no noise in the waiting room of his little surgery. If anyone dropped something, or talked loudly, the little shutter would go up with a bang. He would look sharply into the waiting room. There was no need for him to say a word, for his sharp eye would rove over the occupants and down the shutter would come again.

There was one task he would not do, and that was to pull teeth. This he left to his burly assistant, Dr. Mansel. David, with violent toothache, walked back to Gorlan from the school at Rhyd-y-pant one day and went straight to the Surgery. He found a mother with a little girl there on a similar errand. The victim refused to go into the doctor's chair (not a dental chair by any means). When the assistant found out David's errand, he said :

"Now, my little girl, you stand by and see how this young Briton gets his tooth pulled without a murmur."

He put the tooth-ached David in the chair, found out which was the offending molar and seized a pair of rather formidable-sized forceps.

"Now open your mouth as wide as ever you can," he said, and slid his left arm around David's neck into a firm hold. The forceps were applied. A mighty struggle ensued between Dr. Mansel and that firmly-rooted tooth, while David yelled and yelled. After three wrenches from a strong wrist the assistant unhooked his victim and displayed the tooth victoriously! He had proved himself to be of the "bull-dog breed," anyway, even if David had not proved himself a Briton!

When David took his aching jaw-bone through the Surgery door, it was to find that the mother and daughter were in full flight!

But the Surgery story that kept Gorlan in much laughter during this period was about Dr. Edwards himself. He had got the colliers to agree to an increase of his poundage payment from twopence to threepence and this on the score of being prepared to supply (from the surgery) incidentals supplementary to the usual medicine, pills, ointment, etc. An example would be some special item of diet.

Subsequently, the doctor noticed that a little girl was coming to his surgery regularly every week for castor oil. So he asked the little girl, "What does your mother do with all this castor oil?"

"She puts it on father's working boots, sir," was the reply of the innocent.

The doctor gasped. He knew that it was the custom of all good wives to grease their husband's working boots at each weekend. This was usually made up of goose-grease or some other animal fat to which lamp-black was added. It was melted and applied hot.

As he put the empty bottle back into the child's hand, a twinkle came into his eyes. He said :

"Tell your mother, bach, to send the boots here to the surgery, for we like to apply the castor oil to the patients ourselves."

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The schoolmaster hurried on to the stage and put his choir in readiness and then sent a pupil-teacher to fetch the chairman.

As the latter strode on to the stage, the audience clapped and the choir accompanied by an orchestra of musicians with violins, 'cello, and big bass viol, struck up "See the Conquering Hero Comes"; this put the audience into laughter and good humour right away. Possibly they remembered how the "conquering hero" had dealt with the weekly application for castor oil !

David slipped on his overcoat to hide his clothes and went into the aisle abutting the ante-room to watch the proceedings.

A little boy then came on as David had done five years before and recited a Prologue. This stated the purpose and theme of the concert.

It must be remembered that the Boer War had been won but was still on and that national patriotism was the order of the day. To this the schoolmaster had catered fully.

The choir sang under the control of his baton (and perspiration) such choruses as :

"Glory and love to the men of old,
May their sons copy their virtues bold."

and

"Rule, Britannia."

With the latter, the schoolmaster sprang a surprise on his audience, for as a final touch he put the choir to repeat the refrain, but with an addition, so that it went like this :

"Rule, Britannia, Britannia rules the waves !
Britons nev - - - er shall be (*pause*)—

*Married - - to the mermaids - - at the bottom
of the deep blue sea !*"

The addition was repeated so as to leave the audience in no doubt as to the words.

Not that the ardent Welsh side of Dic-Shon-Dafydd was neglected, for the choir sang old Welsh songs, including *All Through the Night*, *The Bells of Aberdovey*, and *Captain Morgan's March*.

Troupes of children came on the stage for their own particular

items and between the choruses. Each troupe was suitably dressed—girls as Japanese, and Red Cross nurses, boys as sailors, soldiers and policemen, and sang and acted their parts very well. All marching was done to the schoolmaster's playing of the *Men of Harlech* on the piano.

The soldiers rather scared the audience with their toy rifles for on the command "Fire," the small round pink "caps" of explosive created a terrific din.

The policeman strutted the stage with their leader in the tucked-up tunic of the local sergeant of police. They carried batons (lent from the colliery) and as they sang, they smote their chests and chortled :

" And my chest, it is not padding,
But it's solid flesh and bone,
Yes, it is ! Yes, it is ! "

The chief item was ambitious. It was the "Hallelujah Chorus" out of Handel's "Messiah." On the left of the stage on the entry side and between the piano and the wall, was a screen about five feet high. Before this item came on, David could see the crowns of heads, one or two of them baldish, moving behind the screen. While the children's choir sang this wonderful chorus, with its alternations in rising notes of :

" King of Kings
and Lord of Lords,"

some of the musical fans of Gorlan kept glancing towards the screen with occasional smiles.

The schoolmaster, waving his baton with vehemence, never glanced for a moment in that direction, but carried his "voices" into the music and spirit of the superb chorus.

. It was loudly applauded, and an encore called for. The schoolmaster's eyes shone with well-deserved pride.

Then the Nightingale of Gorlan came out from behind the screen and had a word with the chairman and schoolmaster. He announced that as an encore they would call out the Eisteddfod winners of penillion singing from the children's choir to give them the treat they gave to the huge audience at Merthyr.

This was done amidst much clapping and the boys' penillion singing received great acclamation.

The Chairman then gave his address. Its chief item was a condemnation of boys smoking cigarettes. He did really let himself go on this topic. He told them how they were blackening and choking their young lungs and how the paper for making the cigarettes was made from used bandages from hospitals which carried all forms of blood, matter and disease.

The colliers smoked pipes and felt themselves immune from this professional tirade and heartily applauded him. David heard a boy mutter, "I will never smoke them things again!"

The next item found a canvas screen about three feet high stretched along the stage, and a party of boys and girls formed up behind it to sing an action song. They sang about what they had to do in school and the last line of the refrain was :

“ And stand on our heads ! ”

At this, they would stoop out of sight behind the screen and the amazed audience would see coming up in line, the soles, boots and stockings of the actors in the respective sequence of such footgear.

On the last refrain, an accident happened, for the pupil-teacher holding one end of the screen, let it fall. What the laughing audience then saw was a row of boys and girls on their knees. They were holding up their arms on which were seen the boots and stockings previously referred to !

There was a rumour that the schoolmaster had arranged this “accident,” but on this point the archives of Gorlan are not at all clear.

David hurried back into the ante-room, for the darkie minstrels were on next for the final item.

Chairs were placed in the form of a curve, an elaborate, but low arm-chair for “Mr. Johnson,” in which he could loll in superiority, was placed in the centre. A rather low chair accommodated Sambo, for the schoolmaster did not desire that the large size of the two boys should be noticed.

Sambo took up the left end and carried a banjo, while another boy named “Pete,” took up the opposite position on the right end and carried what was known in Gorlan as a “pair of clappers.” These were bones which Pete could handle with much effect. Pete made no small fuss in getting his bones in their correct position and drew the attention of the audience to his performance. The remaining boys had a variety of tambourines and banjos.

The schoolmaster struck a chord on the piano and they broke out into a darkie minstrel song to the accompaniment of the piano and their own tambourines, banjos and clappers. Their refrain was :

“ Ya-ha-ha-ha ! Yo-ho-ho-ho !

Playing on the old banjo ! ”

The dignified “Mr. Johnson,” wearing his *pince-nez* did not take part in these revels.

Then the jokes prepared by the schoolmaster were put over. “Mr. Johnson” asked : “I lost the train at Gorlan Station yesterday, but can you tell me, Sambo, which is the hardest train to catch ? ”

Sambo, with a dog chain around his neck, followed its trail with his hand and from under his jacket pulled out an alarm clock which was attached to the end of it. He studied the clock for a moment, and then said :

“ Well, Massa Johnson, Ah should say it am de twelve-fifty.”

"Oh, and how do you come to say that, Sambo?"

"'Cos it am ten to one if you catches it."

Here the rest of the minstrels threw their heads back in uproarious laughter, smacked their thighs and threw up their legs. This performance they repeated at the end of each joke.

"Now it am my turn to ax a question, Massa Johnson," said Sambo.

"All right, Sambo," was the reply.

Sambo pointed to Pete and said :

"Now can anyone say how Pete dere am like Doctor Edwards?"

"I don't know, Sambo. Pete doesn't look a bit like our respected chairman to me. Perhaps you can give the answer as well as the question. Go on!"

"Well, Massa Johnson, they am both good bone-setters."

The audience joined the troupe in their appreciation.

"I've a question to ax Sambo, Massa Johnson," said Pete.

"Go ahead, then," was the reply.

"How am Eos Gorlan like a storm in de dark?" was the question.

Sambo made a big play of ruminating on the answer and said that he gave it up.

"'Cos he am a *night in gale*," was the reply.

"Well, it is surely my turn to ask a question," said Mr. Johnson.

"Can you tell me how the Gorlan Hall is like Waun-y-gronfa?" Waun-y-gronfa lay beyond Caer Twyn and the top pit and took in the two reservoirs.

"I gives in to you, Massa Johnson," said Sambo.

"Well," was the slow and deliberate reply in order for the necessary action to take place, "Gorlan Hall is like Waun-y-gronfa because there are two ponds here."

The audience saw two heads coming up slowly above the screen on the left. One was a long, grey face with a beard, and the other was a round red face with laughing eyes. They were Tom Pond and his wife, and the audience were much amused.

It was a double joke, for Tom's deep baritone voice and his wife's fine soprano were only too well-known; the audience realised that they were only two out of several who had helped the rendering of the "Hallelujah Chorus." They laughed and laughed again at this subtle revelation of a partial hoax which had been played upon them.

There were several more jokes, one of which gave Dr. Mansel a dig about drawing teeth. It suggested the use of an engine and a hauling rope. The last joke, however, should be related.

Pete asked :

"Massa Johnson, what do folks mean when dey say 'Nothing like leather?'"

"Well, Pete, there is a story about a prince who wanted to build a wall around his city. So he called in all the leading craftsmen of the town in order to consult them. The mason said that a wall of stone was the best form of protection, and the carpenter

advocated a stockade of wood. But the sadler got up and said there is ‘nothing like leather.’ ”

“ What a silly question you axed, Pete,” chimed in Sambo. Pete appeared hurt and said with offended dignity :

“ Well, Sambo, if you has a better way of axing it, all de good people here would like to hear it.”

“ Quite right, Pete,” said Mr. Johnson, “ let’s see if Sambo can do any better.”

“ Massa Johnson,” said Sambo, “ I would put dat question in a more useful way to de people of Gorlan. I would not ax ‘What do folks mean when dey say ‘Nothing like leather.’ ’ I would ax ‘What does leather like?’ ”

“ All right, then, my clever Sambo, and what does leather like? ”

Sambo threw up his feet displaying his boots to the audience and with clear enunciation said :

“ Castor oil, of course! ”

The audience laughed and Doctor Edwards joined in heartily.

The darkie minstrels then stood up and sang their chorus and sat down again.

While the first half of the jokes were being given, a rather excited individual came into the screened space and signalled to the chairman that he had something to tell him. The audience naturally thought that the doctor was being called to an urgent case.

After knowing the man’s errand, the doctor signalled to the schoolmaster and Eos Gorlan. They had a brief consultation and then returned to their respective places.

When the darkie minstrel turn was over, Dr. Edwards strode in front of the seated David, and paid warm tribute to the schoolmaster and all others who had given them such a good concert. Then he went on :

“ As you all know, there’s been a meeting of the workmen’s delegates and the colliery owners in Cardiff to-day. When this concert started it looked as though we would see ‘down tools’ on Monday.

“ But word has just come that a settlement was reached an hour ago and the news was telegraphed to the post office. The post-master has come here with the news himself. Do you think that this news is worth a clap? ” The audience clapped enthusiastically, and the doctor went on :

“ It’s becoming late and these wonderful children have finished giving you their concert. To wind up, I’m going to ask Eos Gorlan to lead us in singing, no, not *The Land of My Fathers*, much as we love this dear little Wales of ours ; not *God Save the King*, much as we appreciate our new King Edward the Seventh. No, with hearts full of gratitude for the news we have just received we’ll sing to the glory of another King, and we’ll ask for a Light to help us further on our ‘way.’ ”

“ I want that screen by the piano taken down.” This was done and the best voices of Gorlan stood revealed, but there was no

laughter now. The moods of the Welsh people sway from extreme to extreme with quick facility. The doctor went on :

" We'll sing the first and last verses of ' Lead, Kindly Light.' Sing it in Welsh, but if you can't in Welsh, sing it in English, for the tune is the same. Now, will you all stand up ; our notable Eos Gorlan will conduct and our capable schoolmaster will play the accompaniment on the piano."

Eos Gorlan came up beside him, and the schoolmaster struck the chord on the piano. Then they sang in that wonderful unison of Welsh voices the lines which they felt fervently as they sang them :

*" Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on :
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on ;
Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see
The distant scene, one step enough for me."*

But the Light was not allowed to shine, and the boys who took part in that concert were men of suitable age when the holocaust of 1914 broke upon us. Many of those sweet voices were hushed in foreign lands, and those who survived were to see their own dear children take their place in another war. Many of those who were at the concert had cause and solace in remembering the last verse of Newman's hymn :

*" So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile."*

CHAPTER XIV

DAVID STARTS HIS WORKING CAREER

WHILE David had gone through the experiences of six weeks, his mother had finally decided where he was to start working. There were about three hundred "Company Houses" in Gorlan, and a mason and a mason's boy were regularly employed in doing the repair work on them. Naomi wanted to avoid stunting David's growth with very heavy continual labour and she rightly considered that the mason's boy job would be suitable. She found that the boy already employed in this way was simply waiting for a vacancy as a smith's striker in the foundry on the pit-head, and with a move-up of boys in the foundry, a vacancy would occur for the mason's labouring boy. This she bespoke on David's behalf.

Mr. B. D. Long had wanted David to be apprenticed as a shop assistant, but the boy felt that it held no future and the pay was too small.

About this time, however, Joe Jenkins had come to the threshold of matrimony with a young lady in a draper's shop who had inherited fifty pounds from an aunt. The result was that Joe Jenkins, his wife and the fifty pounds left Gorlan to open up a business in a shop in one of the newer villages in the mining valleys. Not that either outfitting or drapery attracted them. Joe Jenkins bought some white jackets and aprons from the firm of D. B. Long and Son at cost price and launched into the more lucrative and ready cash business of selling fried fish and chip potatoes. The venture associated with the affable personality of Joe Jenkins proved quite successful and news reached Gorlan later that he had acquired that hallmark of affluence in those days, a motor-car.

So Mr. Long installed David as an assistant at six shillings a week until his other job came along. Mr. Long lived at the back of his shop, so that Mrs. Long could be appealed to in times of stress, and she helped regularly on Saturdays. Otherwise David was in sole control of the shop, including all the smaller articles of a haberdasher's business—and the till. It was a gesture of confidence in David, which he appreciated with loyalty and with an honesty that knew not temptation.

David's greatest trouble was that he could not find enough to do and thus keep his active hands and brain sufficiently employed. And how dead the village seemed while the children were at school. That experience was entirely new to him, and he felt happier while the children rushed past the shop on their way home.

On Mondays there was the influx of the "gentlemen of the road." These commercial travellers came up by train to Gorlan. Here they were met with spanking hansom cabs from Pont Enfys and in these they went from shop to shop right down the valley.

During the first few days of November, the call came for him to go to the job he awaited. So he purchased from Mr. Long a brown rib long trousers (his first) and a little blue serge working jacket. These cost him four or five shillings apiece. Then another ten shillings went to buy a pair of strong hob-nailed working boots. He was also obliged to obtain a certificate from Mr. Davies, the schoolmaster, stating that he had passed the "labour examination" two years previously.

At six-thirty the following morning he presented himself at the small housing repairs depot. This comprised a corrugated iron shed erected against the end of a company house. It was in a central position and with a small yard around it. The shed contained ladders and other repair equipment, and materials such as plaster and cement. It had no fireplace of any kind. The yard contained mortar, paving stones, bricks, slates, and similar imperishable materials.

After waiting some time at the yard door, it was opened and he was welcomed by his new master, George Tomkins, the mason. He and his wife lived in the house adjoining the yard.

George Tomkins was a respectable type of artisan, but a bit of a character in a way. He was of medium height, of portly build and about forty years of age. He wore a moustache and he was garbed in a cap, white corduroy trousers and short leather leggings. Like David he wore a blue serge jacket beneath the ordinary jacket of a suit.

He had held the job for about fifteen years and during that time about fifteen boys had served him, generally pending going elsewhere. He was, therefore, a *connoisseur* of boys. He looked David up and down and took him into the shed. Then he proceeded to initiate his new boy in the duties required of him.

"You need not come until a quarter to seven in the morning," he said. "Then you goes home to breakfast between half-past eight and nine. Our dinner-time is between one and two and us finishes at half-past five in the afternoon. That makes nine-and-a-half hours, but on Saturday us finishes at one o'clock, making a week of fifty-three-and-a-half hours."

"Your pay is two shillings a day, making twelve shillings a week, but if you works on Saturday afternoon, you gets a quarter-turn extra, which makes it twelve and sixpence a week. Us gets paid every fortnight, but on the 'blank' Saturday, us has to go to the colliery office for our money. Our boss is 'the gaffer' as us all calls him, but he's really the boss mechanic of the pits."

Then he showed David where all the things were kept in the depot, and told him how he must keep the hod, buckets and wheelbarrow clean. As a carpenter was being sent from the colliery on times to help with his particular trade, an improvised carpenter's bench was attached to the low side of the shed. It would be David's job to clean out the shavings and burn them in the yard.

"Our work," he continued, "is mostly repairing grates, for these colliers' wives burns a lot of coal, repairing roofs and clearing choked drains."

Here he frowned heavily at the thought of recalcitrant drains of the company houses.

"That reminds me," he added, "you'd better get a pair of short leggings like mine. There's plenty of second-hand leggings about now with Army contractors back from the war in South Africa. They only costs one and sixpence a pair and they'll keep the bottom of your trousers dry."

So a pair of leggings, duly cut to suit a boy's legs, was added to David's accoutrement.

He was shown how to bring a stone-hard lump of mortar to a plastic consistency suitable for use, and a heavy task that proved to be to an immature lad. He often wished that the colliery mortar contained less lime.

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George Tomkins was an immigrant from a rural all-English-speaking district in Wales. With a contempt for many things, he had a contempt for the Welsh language. He was proud of his lineage and felt that "this lingo" as he called it, was an aspersion on the all-conquering sweep of the Anglo-Saxon. He was firmly convinced that English should be spoken solely by all the nations of the world!

That his English was defective did not trouble him at all, but to find David with a good English grammar and a good range of vocabulary caused him some resentment. He told David one day that he was "like a man what has seen better days."

The Welsh were taught English with grammatical correctness in the schools, but the Welsh language was ignored. Consequently although the children might speak English with Welsh accent and intonation, their English was better than their Welsh. They learnt bad English later from the lesser educated of the immigrants and many of the errors owe their origin to this.

Tomkins was Conservative in politics and proud of it. He was Church of England and his contempt of Nonconformists was deep. With only a boy to work with, his sense of superiority continued to grow.

What David detested was the idle time on his hands. Tomkins rarely did a stroke of work until after nine o'clock, and even then in a rather belated fashion. To fill in his time usefully, David took a book on building construction to the shed one day, and when Tomkins came in he found David reading it and studying the diagrams of brick-work, stone-work, etc. Tomkins' disgust was intense, and he gave expression to it in no uncertain terms!

"Does you think that you makes a good mason by reading that there twaddle-de-re? All this here book-larning's all nonsense. If you wants to larn a trade, then you does it by using bricks, stones

and mortar. Look at me—I never reads books like that, or building papers either ; but I knows my job better than any books could larn me. Don't let me see you wasting your time like that again ! ” He snorted with disgust.

Tomkins suffered from two special complaints. He complained about a pain in the small of his back, and from the firm conviction that his work was a martyrdom.

Concerning the former, hard-working colliers, with utter lack of sympathy suggested that he was not “ bending his back ” enough, this being the term applied to lazy workers in those days. Those who waited in vain for repairs to be done to their houses were even more emphatic !

The ceilings of the bedrooms were most in arrears with Tomkins and the cold draught would come through the bared laths of the holes on to the shivering occupants. This, to colliers working in hot places, made for the biggest grudge the tenants had against him. When told about these ceilings he would readily promise to attend to them and would as readily forget.

As he and David passed along one of the streets one day, a woman cleaning a bedroom window called out :

“ Tomkins ! When are you coming to repair these awful holes in the ceilings. You promised to do them six months ago and before the winter came on.”

Tomkins stopped, eyed the shouting woman and with some dignity replied :

“ Promises, missus, is like pie-crusts, made to be broken,” and went on his way smiling his satisfaction at the thought of his silencing retort.

Many—very many—were the pieces of brown paper pasted over the holes in those ceilings—awaiting the uncertain day of their proper repair.

§

Some tenants would register their complaints at the colliery office or with the gaffer, the latter form being the most effectual means of having a repair carried out.

After such a complaint, Tomkins decided that the whole of a certain bedroom ceiling had better come down and he would renew it. By some freakish idea, he decided that the laths of one half of it had better be renewed as well. So he sent David up on to the ceiling joists with a small steel bar, and put him to smash down the mortar and the laths ! Tomkins left the room and closed the door. The dust from the dry black mortar was terrific, but David persisted until the whole row of lathwork was stripped. He was as black as any collier when he had finished, and his clothes filthy.

The cleanly looking Tomkins then stripped the mortar from the remaining lathwork while David carried the rubbish away. With much complaint about dust coming down (which was very

little) Tomkins renewed the lathwork ! but the job he gave David was to tap the old stripped lathwork with a hammer from below in order to remove the mortar that remained on the upper side of the laths. This task David found to be worse than the other, for the dust kept falling into his eyes as he tapped the laths.

Naomi Bowen had a shock when she saw her son returning that night, and although she made no comment, she was not pleased.

The following day, some mortar, reground in the colliery mill, was delivered in front of the house. Tomkins got ready for the task before him. He arranged the mortar board (spot) on his scaffolding, and then told David to fetch up three or four buckets of mortar—"quick now !" David struggled to carry these heavy buckets up the steep stairs while Tomkins "rested awhile."

Then the boy had to put the mortar on the hand mortar-board (hawk) and hand it up to Tomkins, who with a plastering trowel laid it on the ceiling. This process saved Tomkins bending his precious back, and if David did not lift it up high enough, he was sharply told to do so.

When the large mortar board was emptied, the previous process was repeated until the whole of the ceiling was covered.

The following morning, Tomkins smoothed out the ridges of his previous day's trowelling, and removed himself and his equipment from the scene of his heavy labours ! Some days of recuperation followed !

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All those associated with Tomkins, including tenants who alleged their sympathy, knew about that aching back of his. Looking up advertisements one day, the hope of salvation came to him and he promptly bought a box of "Pilate's Pellets."

These he swore by and said that they gave him some relief. He wanted both the backache and the glory of having found a miraculous cure. So on the one hand he extolled "Pilate's Pellets" and on the other hand he deplored that he was not doing justice to them. This concerned the diet which should accompany the regular use of the means of cure. Tomkins would rattle off what he was to eschew in the form of foods in order to make the cure complete, but sadly stated that he could not bring himself to such sacrifice. Nor was this to be wondered at altogether, for the firm selling "Pilate's Pellets" were practically recommending starvation as the necessity of doing full justice to their wonderful cure !

So Tomkins, who loved his role of martyrdom better than anything else in the world, still used his aching back as a topic of doleful conversation. He blamed the choking drains of Gorlan more than anything else, and drains and backache brought him to feel that the lighter work and the rural atmosphere of his native district would bring him greater happiness.

So he consulted another man of his native district living in Gorlan, and this man and his wife simply poured out sympathy on him. The man had started in the building trade and given it up to go to the mines. That was how Tomkins followed on to Gorlan.

Tomkins told the gaffer, who never came near the houses and their complaining women-folk, that he wanted to "jack up." Now, his knowledge of the drain system of the houses was something to appreciate, and Mr. Benjamin did not want to lose him. Tomkins got the shock of his life to find that his native sympathiser had already bespoken the job should he leave it! So the gaffer got him to give up the idea, for a time anyway.

The result was that assistance from the pit-head in the form of a fine old labourer, was given to Tomkins when drain-cleaning became troublesome. The labourer's name was William Prosser.

When the houses were built, the drains had been laid with insufficient fall, but the most troublesome feature was the sand that the tenants spread on their stone floors to keep them clean. This would work itself into the drains and with a mixture of sewage would silt them up somewhat solidly.

After clearing the main drain of its stoppage, the drain fitments would have to be cleared. With something like a leer on his face, Tomkins would instruct David to carry out this odious task.

The Spartan spirit that Gorlan nursed became evident. The lad would not jib at any task given him, and Tomkins gave out that he was the best lad he had ever had. This caused David some surprise, for with Tomkins' ready criticism he was fast developing an "inferiority complex." Possibly it did him a bit of good to have his conceit shaken, but in later years he realised that Tomkins as a personality did not help him at all.

Tomkins got Mr. Benjamin to allow him to relay a length of drain to a greater fall, and old William Prosser and a few other labourers were sent to help him.

When it came to lay the new length, Tomkins' conservatism asserted itself. He did not believe in these new fangled ideas of jointing the pipes with cement and sand mortar; no, not even lime mortar with cement in it. He said :

"I likes, William, a bit of clay well worked up and pushed into the joints." David's father told David that the clay would shrink and the joints would leak. Also that the roots of plants, trees and shrubs, in seeking moisture, would push themselves through the clay joints and thrive in the pipes and choke them.

David ventured to suggest this without stating where the information came from. Tomkins came down on him "good and proper," so that all the men could hear him. He said :

"Look here, young fella me lad, you wants to 'teach your grandmother to milk the ducks.' I told you how that book larning would do you no good. This is the way my father taught me how I lays drains, aye, long afore you was born. And this is the way my grandfather laid 'em, and who is you to go larning me how to

do my job ? You wants taking down a peg or two, me lad, and larn to do things properly ! ”

The sensitive lad flushed with shame and he realised how foolish he had been to express an opinion.

So Tomkins went on laying the drain. It was in a clayey soil, some of it hard and some soft. He did not dream for a moment that to keep that drain in its proper gradient he should have put concrete under it, or indeed, boiler ashes which were plentiful.

Instead of using gradient (boning) roads and a line to get the pipes laid to true gradients, he used a short length of tapered board (template) and his spirit level on each pipe. David always remembered the procedure that followed, for even his young inexperienced mind knew that it was all wrong, but he ventured no more criticism.

Old William Prosser would lay a pipe in position ; then Tomkins would put his template and level on the back of it, while William held a wood rammer in readiness to hit the socket of the pipe into the clay to Tomkins' instructions.

“ Down,” Tomkins would say, and if the clay beneath was soft, he would add “ Gently, now.” If the clay was hard, and the pipe would not go down as far as it ought to go, he would say :

“ Well, William, we leaves it at that, it's sure to go down to its proper place in time.”

After a year or two the drain was probably more like a switchback railway than anything else ! But by that time Tomkins was secure *on* his native heath. No, not *in* it, for the infallible use of “ Pilate's Pellets ” must have kept Tomkins above ground until he was about eighty years of age.

§

David, with his sense of observation and curiosity, saw a great deal of the maintenance of buildings during that year he was with Tomkins. All sorts of work fell to them, including repairs to the colliery offices and the workmen's library. At the latter place they swept the badly cranked chimney flues with a weight and a rope to which some stiff rushes were attached. Of course, Tomkins was at the top of the chimney while poor old William was at the bottom pulling down on himself from each active flue a barrowful of soot.

It was at this building that Tomkins nearly found his Waterloo. Some alterations were necessary to the domestic water system, and a stoker from the colliery, who claimed to be a plumber by trade from a large English town, was called in to help.

The alleged plumber failed to stop the water so that he could joint the lead pipes. He was a great advocate of the use of bread crumbs. These he rolled into a ball and thrust it into the pipe to stop the seeping water, but without avail.

So Tomkins, who had a turncock's key in the shed, sent David for it. Without any knowledge whatsoever of the water-mains,

Tomkins and the plumber went out into the streets and shut off several valves. The result was that Tom Pond noticed that his meters were either going wrong or, as proved to be true, no water was going down the valley! There was a rare to-do about it, and as the Water Company threatened to prosecute, Tomkins was put "on the carpet" at the colliery office.

§

If Tomkins deserved praise, it was not only for keeping the drains going, but for keeping the roofs in repair.

After a gale, David was sent out to make an inspection of all roofs, back and front, and to make a record of all missing slates.

Then, on the first fine spell, they would sally forth with tools, ladders, slates, and nails to render the roofs weather-tight again. Tomkins did not believe in running the risk of accident or premature death in carrying out this work. A strong hook and a long length of rope soundly secured the upright ladder and the roof ladder to the eaves of the houses. It is true that David's father laughed at this extreme sense of security when he was told about it, but David in later years always maintained this principle of security for building employees. Many years after, a reckless slater working for David, even although he had been warned, slid off a roof on a roof ladder and was killed.

David had to carry up slates and mortar, always to the sharp injunction of "Quick, now," and he learned the principles of roof work, and the weaknesses of work not properly done.

The mortar and slates were transported in a barrow. This bit of equipment had been made at the pit carpenter's shop, and with all the sturdiness of structure which pit work demanded. But it was frightfully heavy for a young boy of thirteen years of age, and pushing it up the hilly streets of Gorlan, even without anything in it, was enough of a task.

One day Tomkins gave David his two-foot steel rule and told him to fetch a paving stone of a certain size from another yard they had in Cambridge Street. The street itself was level, but it came on to the length of steep hill over which we saw the spectacular finish of the walking race.

The paving stone weighed about seventy pounds and by means of skilful leverage the boy got it on to the barrow and wheeled it to the foot of the steep hill. Here he took a rest and then pushed it on to the slope. Then he stopped, put a stone behind the wheel, called up all his strength and pushed his heavy load up three paces.

There were loungers on the Gorlan Square who watched him, yet he gave them no glance of appeal, and no help was forthcoming. A great deal was expected from boys in those days.

By perseverance and hard effort, and only doing three paces at a time, he took his load to the top of the gradient. Then he saw Tomkins coming to help him, but the worst part of the journey was done.

Many and various were the tasks they had to do. They stripped off broken slate roofs of water-closets at the far ends of gardens, and replaced them with stout corrugated iron which they tarred later.

They renewed the boarded floors of parlours which had dry-rotted into collapse ; roof gutters and rain-water pipes were renewed, and David was sent to help the carpenter or plumber when he was required. The latter taught him to do lead joints and fit leather washers to taps and rubbers in valves of W.C. cisterns. It was good experience.

When David looked back on this part of his career, he was glad of the initiation he received in the maintenance of buildings and public works ; but like all the Tomkins' boys he met later, he had to confess that he did not like the treatment given him.

CHAPTER XV

DERFEL'S FIRST EXPERIENCE IN THE COAL PIT

WE must go back some little time to follow Derfel. Despite his parents' continued objection, Derfel Pugh went down the pit soon after the school concert. He bought from David (at Mr. Long's shop) a pair of duck trousers. This garment cost him only three shillings and suited the warm atmosphere of the up-cast shaft pit—in this case the top pit. The colliers in the colder down-cast pit invariably bought white moleskin trousers, which cost them about 1s. 6d. more. He also bought a leather strap, for this enabled the colliers to strip to the waist and dispense with braces. Mr. Long sold cotton singlets (under-vests) to colliers working in these hot places at sixpence each. These they would wear as some protection to their skins and wring the perspiration out of them before leaving the *talcens* (coal faces). The thick flannel shirt then replaced the singlet for the return home.

Derfel bought two each of these singlets, shirts and underpants.

Shirts, and the underpants (of material to match the shirts) all cost him three and sixpence apiece, but the stouter Welsh flannel would have cost him a shilling each more.

He went off to buy a pair of strong hob-nailed boots and was ready for his working career.

Then he went to the colliery office and "signed on." He was given a slip of paper and with this authority he went to John David, the lamp-man (a very fine old man) and was shown his lamp number and its position on the lamp-racks. The safety oil lamps were cleaned and replenished with paraffin oil after each shift's use and placed in their respective numbered positions ready for the next shift. Each man and boy had his own lamp and a record was made of each lamp not taken for its respective shift.

The following morning, thrilled with excitement, Derfel went to the day bank between 6.30 and 7 a.m. He was very proud of himself but felt that his white duck trousers indicated his newness as a collier.

He drew his lamp, unscrewed the oil pot and burner, and cleaned the glass carefully; then he lit it and rescrewed the pot to the lantern portion. After that he took it to be locked, a compulsory process which made for safety in mines.

Then his *Butty*, the man with whom he was to work, shepherded him into the cage of the pit. As he was a new boy, the others who comprised the cage-load of men, put him in the centre and told him to grip a rail on the side of the cage above his head. Then there came a sharp drop which shook Derfel's inside a bit, and he could see the sides of the pit-shaft racing upwards! Another jolt

and the racing pit-shaft slackened its speed and a little bump indicated that Derfel "had arrived."

He came out into a gloom which was fitfully illuminated with electric light. Here he and his mate sat down on the side of the masonry-arched gallery and awaited others who would travel in the same direction as they. Here the droll-humoured Derfel was in his element, for the colliery humorists were letting fly their chaff and banter at each other at full speed.

When ready, he joined a party for the coal face and walked and walked the long first journey through endless galleries. These were badly lit with occasional electric lamps, but eventually, even these were lost and the safety lamps were the party's only means of illumination. One man stumbled and fell, his lamp going out in consequence; the man cursed his luck and returned to the bottom of the pit to have it relit.

Derfel and his mate got to their *talcen*, where their tools lay in readiness and a tram waited to be filled. The collier placed his jack of cold tea and his tin case of food in a corner, and divested himself. Derfel followed suit.

The colliers were very good to their young butties and did not expect too much of them. At first, their sole job was to fill the trams with the aid of a *curling box*, a broad flat scoop with a handle on each side of it. The large lumps were dumped in the tram without its aid, but when it came to fill the smaller lumps the curling box was extremely useful; it was shoved into a heap and the small lumps further drawn into it by hand.

Derfel enjoyed this first novelty of experience, but he was very glad to sit down for a repast when the shift was about half-way through. How nice that cold tea was in this warm and dusty atmosphere!

He looked around him and saw how his mate had arranged pitprops in order to ensure their safety. He noticed with much satisfaction that his duck trousers were getting blacker and he covertly rubbed his face with his now dust-laden cap in order to show himself to be a real collier.

The collier cut into the coal face with a sharp-pointed mandril, using it side-ways when under-mining the coal above.

They cut and filled three trams; these were brought to them by hauliers with horses, and the laden trams were taken away to make up the *journeys* of several trams. These were then drawn to the bottom of the pit by steam hauling engines. The two pit cages took up a laden tram and brought down an empty one on each travel. The full tram was then weighed on a weigh-bridge—where a check-weigher, representing the colliers' interests, was also installed.

Then it was tipped over screens to separate the small from the lumps. Over these screens trimmers with sharp mandrils inspected it and removed any slag which was visible. The chalked number on the tram indicated who had filled the tram and woe to the collier who filled dirty coal!

From the screens it was emptied into railway trucks. These passed over a weigh-bridge, and, forming train journeys of fifty five-ton trucks each, passed on to the coal port of Cardiff and thence to many parts of the world.

The small coal passed through the screen into the *billy-box*. From there it was released into a truck beneath.

Derfel's mate had his watch in a heavy brass case with a screwed-on lid, through the glass of which the dial could be seen. About half-past four, they made for the pit bottom where, amidst the chaff and banter again, they waited their turn to be taken up.

The bank for leaving was between 5 p.m. and 5.30 p.m., and this time Derfel saw the pit-shaft racing downwards. He blinked as he came out into the daylight and made his way homewards with a glad heart.

He washed his hands and sat down to a good meal his mother had prepared for him. The boiler, an oval shaped iron utensil, was on the fire and a wash-tub was brought in front of the fire. Colliers would not bathe in zinc tubs which were cold to touch. Then Derfel and his father began to bathe in relays. One would wash himself to the waist with his trousers still on. He would kneel on the floor to do so and the other would wash and dry his back. There was a legend that washing the back weakened it, and some old colliers would allow that part to be washed only once a week !

After washing and drying the upper half of the body, Derfel slipped off his lower garments and stepped into the tub. Keeping a standing position and chastely facing the fire, he washed the lower half and stepped out to dry himself. Then he put on warm clean underwear and his "afternoon trousers" and went upstairs to finish dressing. He had, in mining parlance "washed all over."

He was rather tired, but went out to see David at the shop to tell him of his experiences and of the thrill of having started on his manhood !

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It is somewhat remarkable how the dangers of colliery work did not stop the boys from going down the pits. From 1837 to 1901 there had been sixty colliery explosions in South Wales. The loss of life was about 3,000, apart from burns and other injuries. In Cilfynydd, in 1894, 276 men were killed. In addition to the effect of explosions, other fatal mishaps occurred, while accidents, which meant wounds and broken limbs were fairly common.

David remembered the Cilfynydd explosion very well. At that time there was a news poster outside the newspaper shop depicting a boy carrying a miner's lamp groping his way to safety. He also remembered how in 1896 the schoolchildren of Gorlan were asked to bring used boots, shoes, clothing or money to help the children of Tylorstown when 57 men were killed in the explosion.

The records of that period show that the Welsh coal-field absorbed more boys than any other coal-field. There were 9,180 boys underground as compared with the next highest of 6,812 in the Durham coal-field.

The coal owners claimed that the colliers' earnings were about 9s. a day; that boys got 12s. to 15s. a week when they went down first and by the time boys were fifteen years of age they often earned 20s. These were probably under the most favourable conditions. A letter disputing this states that the *collier's wage did not average more than 8s. a day* and that good colliers in bad places earned only 6s. to 7s. per day.

When this 8s. a day is contrasted with the 4s. 6d. of the slate quarryman and the 2s. 8d. of the farm labourer, it will be seen that the collier received more money than the others. That he deserved all the payment he got for working hard under difficult conditions goes without saying.

§

That winter, David and Derfel joined the evening continuation classes at the Gorlan School. Davies, the schoolmaster, with the help of two assistant teachers kept three large classes going.

Reading, writing and arithmetic were the chief subjects and the schoolmaster tried a bit of French as well. The classes were held for three nights a week and lasted from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The classrooms were each lit with four flat gas jet burners, for incandescent mantles, although available, had not become of common use in Gorlan. Large fires maintained heat for there was no central heating apparatus.

The students were nearly all young colliers, whose ages ranged up to thirty years of age. In fact, single men in lodgings were very glad of this means of spending winter evenings.

The two boys did not learn anything new, but they kept their hold on their education of the past. In fact, the other students continually asked their help to solve arithmetical and algebraic problems, and this was good experience for them.

One assistant teacher kept his class enthralled by reading out to them a tale of stirring adventure and kept them to attendance by leaving off each week in the middle of a most thrilling episode.

David did not tell Tomkins that he was going to these classes for he did not court the ready rebuff and contempt of that worthy.

§

Easter came and the evening classes were over.

David and Derfel heard indirectly that one of their girl schoolmates at Rhyd-y-pant, Gwenfron Morris, had gone to a school in Kent. But as time passed, both boys felt in some indefinable way that she and they were now quite apart on the score of social distinction. She was to be a doctor, they were on the much lower scale of manual workers.

For the boys' weekly story papers and the novelettes of the period stressed the inferiority of a man who worked with his hands, while the top class was emphasised as being the possessors of "blue blood."

One novelette depicted the horror of a young lady who happened to be shown over some works and found her would-be fiancé garbed in an over-all jacket! The happy conclusion (with wedding bells) came about only after she had found that he had never done a stroke of manual work in his life!

The boys' papers also subscribed to this standard of social distinctions. There was, for instance, a decided difference, between soldiering, sailorizing, or even a trapeze artist in a circus, and being a manual worker.

David and Derfel read in their weekly boys' paper a serial story about a boy and a girl in a circus. They would go around the circus ring on bare horse-back, go through thrilling escapes on the trapeze, possibly with one suspending rope frayed by the villain, and all with the love-light in their eyes! Although they thought that they were the darlings of different circus parents, the joyful ending revealed the boy to be a foundling and the lost son of a duke, while the girl proved to be also a foundling and the daughter of an earl! What romance!

Not only that, but great wealth was essential and the finding of treasure or coming into an unexpected (and always large) inheritance, helped the novelists of the day to establish an illusion of happiness.

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Saturday afternoons found David and Derfel making a close inspection of all the shop windows. Mr. James, the builder and ironmonger, had an enterprising assistant who smelt of paraffin "from afar off." The artificial light of nearly all the homes of Gorlan depended on his ministrations, for gaslight and electric light, although available, were but infrequently installed. He was an expert concerning paraffin lamps, and at a glance could fit the correct sized wick to a burner.

Possibly his soul craved for variety for his shop window offered many surprises. Squirrels in cages provided one special attraction, with the little brown squirrels driving the revolving portion of their cages round and round.

Canaries in cages became in turn another attraction, and the little prisoners would trill their melodies to an enchanted audience. Then a rat-trap, with a real live rat in it, would indicate the need of purchasing this form of trap.

Later Gorlan would see a wonderful display of fretwork exhibited, with finished models of brackets and even the Houses of Parliament with the Big Ben Tower. Alongside these wonderful pieces of craftsmanship would be sets of fretwork tools and paper patterns with their different prices marked on them in accordance with the

range of tools in each set. Derfel bought a set, but like many other sets purchased, it saw only the finished product of one wall bracket.

When the cycling craze was at its height, bicycles and a range of different handle-bars, saddles, pumps, toolbags, lamps, etc., gave Gorlan an idea of what was available in this particular world.

Tea jacks and food boxes would form another exhibition, particularly when enamelled jacks began to be made. A customer utterly devoid of humour, brought a new tin jack back to the shop one day and complained that there was a dent in it. The waggish assistant lifted it up to his mouth like a trumpet and after filling out his cheeks with air, blew a terrific blast into it. The unsmiling customer said :-

" You won't get that there dent out that way," and the assistant roared with laughter.

Mr. B. D. Long provided an interesting show by spreading a new mackintosh over a bucket and arranging a small pool of water on it. On this toy ducks were seen, and this exhibition mutely indicated that no water could penetrate the mackintoshes of Messrs. B. D. Long and Son.

It was the other ironmonger and undertaker who also provided a continual change of much interest, for he was a framer of pictures. After framing a picture, he would place it in his shop window, where others awaited the reluctant call of the owners for their removal to less publicity. This was particularly so with family photographs.

Many large coloured pictures of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee had appeared there, while portraits of statesmen like Gladstone, Disraeli, Lord Salisbury, Tom Ellis and Lloyd George were seen from time to time.

What attracted boys mostly was something much more vivid. They liked to see the pictures of the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) leading in his horse Persimmon after he had won the Derby; but the coloured prints of the battles of the South African war were more to their taste. The picture of Doctor William Price of Llantrisant (who had died in 1893) in a fox-skin head-dress, also attracted attention, for on each side of the portrait were series of events in his rebellious life. One showed the cremation of his son on the mountain-top, for which he was brought before a court of justice which decided that the cremation of a dead body was quite legal. It was probably the first form of cremation of a dead body in this country in modern times.

The photograph of a cemetery in America appeared quite often. This showed rows on rows of tombstones of the persons who lost their lives in the great flood of Johnstown when a dam burst and the water swept away many to their deaths, including relatives of the people of Gorlan.

All the shop windows were closely scanned by the boys, who

made a systematic tour from one shop window to another out of sheer curiosity.

The same curiosity took them to the "Cheap Jack" in the yard of the Clarence Hotel. Here a van displaying clocks, sets of cutlery, jewelry, crockery, photograph albums and the like was surrounded by a marquee. The side of the van was let down to form a platform, from which three single-plank runways spread out through the standing audience; along these the auctioneer's assistants would run along with the wares demanded.

The "Cheap Jack" would exhibit, say, a set of knives and forks, and ask for offers, starting off with a very high figure and coming down to a more reasonable price. Then he would stop and take purchases.

Watches and chains were popular as purchases, and the term "gold watch and chain" was often used in Gorlan, although there were but few such gold watches in the village. A silver watch and chain was the usual form of purchase.

When the sales lagged, one or other of the assistants would sing a comic song, tell a story or crack some jokes; it was these efforts that really kept many persons there, including David and Derfel.

Some years before, Checkoh, another herbalist from the "Wild American Prairie," had his stand on the same spot. He and one assistant were suitably garbed in costume of the Wild West. He had several small ponies and a monkey which were sent around the village during the day to attract attention to the great opportunities of the Gorlanites to see and hear the one and only Checkoh.

When the boys heard him, his chief attack was on rheumatism. He had an old man with bent knees to come up on his platform. This client leaned heavily on his stick to prevent falling forward. Then Checkoh rubbed the liniment vigorously into the knees and sent the old man away without his stick. The old man tottered uncertainly away and Checkoh explained that the old man had used the stick for so long that its use had become a habit, hence the old man's tottered walk!

Checkoh also provided lighter and more attractive items to keep the crowd about him. A man with a banjo attired in clown costume and make-up would sing an occasional comic song. One of them went something like this:

" Mary Jane, she never was the same
For when she left the village she was shy ;
 But alas and alack !
 She came back
 With a naughty little twinkle in her eye ! "

Checkoh also enlivened his sales with stories. One was about a doctor's apprentice who accompanied his master on his rounds in order to learn his job. One day the doctor said to a patient :

" Didn't I tell you not to eat eggs ? "

"Yes, doctor."

"Then why have you been eating them?"

"But I haven't, doctor."

"Oh! Yes you have! I can see the egg shells under the grate."

The apprentice made a mental note of this technique. During his first round on his own, he followed it up with a bedridden patient, who happened to be a farmer.

"You've been eating meat and horse-meat at that. How can you expect to get better if you don't do as you're told?"

"But I haven't been eating horse-meat or any other meat. How do you come to say that, doctor?"

"Well," was the fierce reply, "there's a saddle and bridle under the bed!"

Many years afterwards David was told that Checkoh pulled teeth in another district, and employed the local brass band to drown the yells of his clients!

All these visitations to Gorlan were of much interest. It was true that the store of golden sovereigns of the village was less after them, but each provided a fillip to its life and gave it some variety.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRAVALS OF TOMKINS

WHILE Derfel was working happily in the pit, David continued his work with George Tomkins, the mason, and drain-clearing and repairs were proceeded with. The observant lad was given an insight into many homes of working people ; the work on the drains and the roofs brought about his frequent passage through the houses for there was no rear access to them. What he saw was of great interest and gave him a basis of study in what later came to be known as the "Housing of the Working Classes."

Although the houses were identical in plan and appearance, how varied they were in their occupants and in their equipment ! Yes, and how varied in cleanliness as well. A spotlessly clean house would be next door to a badly-kept house, but the latter were in a small minority, and even then the pay-Saturday cleaning fervour of Gorlan would bring about improvement.

There were tenants who were always seen outside their homes as clean and respectable ; but their houses might be anything but clean, and the cleanly Tomkins, as he entered such houses, would sniff and mutter to David the one dread word, "Bugs." Then they kept away from the walls as much as possible.

There was, however, the reverse. Tenants appearing ragged and slatternly in person would have their houses wonderfully clean. One woman of this type had her table and chairs scrubbed to a remarkable whiteness, the floors spotless, and the whole house exuding a hygienic cleanliness ; she herself was clean, but untidy in appearance.

Others would concentrate on titivating their houses and giving them greater charm. In houses with more affluence than the company houses carpet would be laid over the stairs, and along the centre of it a white patterned oilcloth to take the wear and any soiling.

Most of the tenants loved shining brass-work but one woman in a company house had a positive mania for it. Her kitchen had stands, trivets, fender, mantel rails, frieze and border of this metal. On the mantel shelf she had the usual Gorlan row of brass candlesticks of varying sizes ; but she had them in greater profusion. On the walls were hung brass horseshoes and similar brass ornaments, a copper kettle, metal meat covers, and other things which were quite useless. A brass horse, cut from a sheet, leaned against the hob. Each Friday found this woman and a helper, busy in bringing all this metal-ware to a resplendent lustre.

Naomi Bowen considered brass-ware of this kind as calling for labour which could be better used otherwise and in her kitchen even the usual row of brass candlesticks was not to be seen.

David was later to weigh up the values of these *houses* as *homes*, and accommodation for varying institutions of family life.

The chief defect was the lack of bathrooms, but such requirements were regarded as luxuries in those days and only within reach of rich people. Even some model villages built in England in those days were not equipped with fixed baths.

Yet those little houses were adapted to general needs. Each had a fair-sized kitchen, a small scullery, termed a lobby, a fair-sized larder, and three bedrooms, one of which could accommodate two beds in emergency. There was also a small sitting-room which provided a quiet place for study for would-be students, or a place to learn the piano for musically-inclined children ; it could be a bedroom for an invalid requiring constant attention, or a spare bedroom in emergency. It was also a place where a caller could be installed for the discussion of business or private matters.

There was a coal recess in the backyard, and the water closets were converted earth closets at the far end of good gardens. The later-built houses had these sanitary necessities in the backyards.

The ground floors were stone-paved or tiled, but the sitting rooms were boarded. The yards were paved, but Tomkins renewed these with good yellow chequered paving tiles.

The houses had no forecourts and were built in blocks which might contain as many as thirty dwellings. All were identically the same in plans, elevations and construction. The ends of the houses were invariably twenty-four feet wide and the frontages sixteen to seventeen feet. The sculleries, larders, W.C.'s. and coal recesses were at the back and single-storied. Bay windows were rare in workmen's houses at that period.

When compared with rural cottages and those of many other industrial workers, the South Wales colliers' houses were much superior. They cost more in rents, 6s. a week, it is true, but the colliers received wages which enabled them to pay such sums.

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It was with regard to the renewal of the boarded floor of the sitting room of Mari Jones' house that Tomkins had an unusual experience. As she was typical of a class of the Gorlan women, we had better describe her first before relating her little conflict with Tomkins.

Mari Jones was a stout jolly-looking woman who kept herself, her family and home clean and fairly tidy, but without going to the extreme lengths that some of the Gorlan women did. She was of medium height and had a roundish face in which two bright blue eyes readily sparkled and twinkled as she met with the humour of her days. Her nose was broad and the retroussé portion rather round. Her hair, almost white, and was coiled into a bun at the back of her head, but the loose wisps which hung about her ears and forehead seemed to be beyond control. She had a smiling

mouth but a fairly firm chin. Her clothes were dark and indicated the need of "a stitch in time," and yet she was not slatternly in appearance. Her blue check apron, if not spotlessly clean, showed the use for which it was intended and the stains were not more than a couple of days old. She wore black stockings and black elastic shoes, but for washing floors and sweeping pavements, she wore clogs.

She and her husband, Ben Jones, had reared a large family in that little house in Ystrad Road, and for a considerable time, she had accommodated her married daughter, the husband and one or two small children in her small sitting room. This form of sub-letting was known to Gorlan as "taking apartments" and there were very many such cases. During the same period of acute housing shortage, men of the day and night shifts had to be accommodated in the same bed, and couches or sofas were resorted to during the weekends. It was a matter of two men of the day shift turning out of bed in the morning and two men of the night shift replacing them. This improvisation was done chiefly in the spirit of helping one another out of difficulty.

Mari Jones did the usual run of work expected from miners' wives in those days and that without the aid of gas or electricity and their respective housework appliances. There was no domestic hot-water service from the great heat of the kitchen fireplace and there was no sink under the cold water tap in the back lobby. The large fire had to be kept going in the living room kitchen all the year round for by means of it all cooking, airing of clothes, ironing and boiling water had to be done.

She would be up at five-thirty to welcome and breakfast the son who was on the night shift and prepare his water for bathing. Then she would breakfast her husband and other two sons for the day shift and fill their food tins and tea-jacks. In this process she would take her own breakfast. After that would follow the usual round of house-work with food on the table nearly all day long to suit the times of her menfolk.

Her daughter, before she was married, followed in the same round, but the girls had their evenings fairly free. In that way they joined the social activities of Gorlan and trod those paths which lead to matrimony at an early age and the consequent increase in house work.

Now that she was without her daughter, Mari Jones faced the heavy wash of many flannels on the Monday of each week with the assistance of a widow named Mrs. March. For this help, Mrs. March was paid one shilling and sixpence and her food; with regard to the latter, Mrs. March had her luxurious peculiarities, and had to be fed on cake. Nor would she work in the small confines of the back lobby, but brought her tubs into the already overworked kitchen. The son on night shift generally fled to the billiard room of the coffee tavern on such hectic domestic days.

Mari Jones had a round of work which kept her busy from

five-thirty in the morning until ten o'clock at night and this meant a working day of sixteen-and-a-half-hours. Yet she was happy in her industrious life and found time to join in the enthusiasms of her husband and children; these included dogs and pigeons.

In the after years, David wondered if it was only persons of Mari Jones' type who could really let themselves go in pure enjoyment. At the Rhyd-y-pant fun fair, Mari Jones with her joyous laughter would be there tasting the thrills of the switchback railway and other entertainments.

One of her sons had a large pigeon-loft in the garden and Mari Jones knew all the ins-and-outs of the local pigeon-racing. On one occasion she was seen tearing along to the post office in her kitchen garb with her enthusiasm beaming from those two bright and laughing eyes. The pigeon of a local race had arrived and the son had quickly removed the pigeon's ring which had to be taken for timing to the local post-master. That was before the Gorlan pigeon fanciers invested in pigeon-racing registration clocks. The son was lame and the excited Mari took the ring from him and dashed to the post office. The post-master told her that she was the first, which increased her excitement and jubilation. As she passed out of the doorway, a man dashed in with another ring. Mari was delighted. She said :

" You're too late, Sam Williams, *my* bird has won the race and the silver cup."

The cup was placed on the mantel-piece of the sitting room and there David saw it. The son would refer to it as the cup his pigeon had won, but Ben Jones would insist that his wife Mari was the winner of the cup !

Ben Jones had a large black retriever dog named Gordon, and the dog would romp about and play with the small children in the street. But woe to the incautious parent who would remove one of the playing children by force for Gordon would go to the child's defence.

A similar-sized retriever, but brown in colour, and wearing a stout brass-studded collar (which Gordon did not) came along one day and barked and snarled at one of the children. The vigilant Gordon immediately sailed in to the attack and the fight was terrific.

The children stopped in their play and kept clear of the two contestants. Mari, hearing the commotion from her kitchen, hurried into the street. She immediately threw herself into the fight and a crowd of neighbours gathered around.

One of them, seeing her danger amongst those large, vicious and snapping jaws, shouted :

" You'll never part those dogs now, Mari Jones."

" Part them ! " replied Mari, making a dive for the neck of the brown dog, " I don't intend parting them. All I want is to take that big collar off the brown dog, so that *my* dog shall have a fair fight ! "

Now that is the type of woman that Tomkins thought fit to challenge in a battle of wits, and, as mentioned before, the conflict had to do with the renewal of the boarded floor of Mari Jones' sitting room.

When the houses were built at a cost of about £140 apiece, those boarded floors were not provided with ventilation, consequently, some of the floors would be infected with dry rot and become dangerous to the inmates. To renew them, a written order would be given to the contractor and during the operations, Tomkins would usually cut a hole in the outside wall in order to provide the ventilation necessary for the preservation of the new floor. He would not bother to insert a ventilating grating in this hole, and cats of the street found them as sanctuaries when chased by dogs. Rats and mice could also travel through the holes without check. Not only that, but when the wind blew through the holes, it passed through the boards and made the rooms cold ; it also lifted any oilcloth laid on the floors which played a merry kind of tattoo on the boards. To any complaint, Tomkins would state that he was glad to know that the ventilation was working so well !

The sitting room floor of Mari Jones' house had been renewed before, but as Tomkins had not cut the hole for ventilation, the renewed floor had become rotten again. So Tomkins got another order for the renewal of the floor so that he could get the contractor to do it.

Then Tomkins had what he thought was a brilliant idea. His own sitting room floor, although not infected by rot, had been charred near the fireplace and otherwise damaged by the previous tenant, and he thought that its entire renewal, without letting the office or the gaffer know, would improve his house considerably. His house was numbered 49, and Mari Jones 19, both being in the same street.

So what Mari saw one morning at nine o'clock was a pit carpenter who had been sent by Tomkins to patch the floor of her sitting room. She refused to clear the room for him, and slipped down to the shed to see Tomkins who, had conveniently removed himself and David to a distant job. So she put on her bonnet and shawl and went to the colliery office without letting the carpenter know. The latter followed up Tomkins who became a bit uneasy and blustering at the turn of events.

After dinner, with David waiting for Tomkins at the shed, he heard a knock on the shed door and opened it to find Mari Jones there with a jolly sort of look on her face. She said :

"Tell *Mister* Tomkins I want to see him."

David fetched Tomkins along and he was obviously ill at ease. Mari opened up :

"What's this patching you want to do to my floor, *Mister* Tomkins ? I want a new floor."

Tomkins hesitated. She did not appear to be quarrelsome,

but there was some suspicion in his mind about that *Mister Tomkins*. He knew better than to break into a harangue with a woman of Mari Jones' type. He had tried his bluster in that way in the past, but it did not work. So he ingratiated :

"Now, Mrs. Jones, us has given you a brand new floor once and you can't expect another. Us will patch it for you good and proper and you'll be quite all right."

Mari Jones smiled as she did in her enthusiasms and she really enjoyed this encounter. If Tomkins didn't want to quarrel, well, neither did she. So she asked :

" Didn't you get an order to have my floor renewed ? "

" Oh, yes, Mrs. Jones," was the ready reply. " You already have had it renewed once. The contractor got the order and he's been paid for it."

" Quite so, *Mister Tomkins*," said Mari, appearing to be a bit abashed by his answer, " but have you an order to renew a floor again ? "

" Oh, yes, Mrs. Jones," was the reply. " I generally has an order for a floor by me ; but not yours, Mrs. Jones." This with conviction.

" There must be some mistake somewhere," murmured Mari as though she was about to give in. She turned her face away from Tomkins as though about to depart and then gazed thoughtfully at David. He thought that one of her eyelids came down quickly and then went up again. As though in afterthought, she turned to Tomkins and said as one whose position was hopeless :

" D'you mind showing me the order you've got, *Mister Tomkins* ? " She was quite sweet in the way she asked it.

Now Tomkins had surmised from the very start that this question would be asked by someone or other. So he got ready for the kill and said affably :

" Not a bit, Mrs. Jones."

Diving his hand into his inner breast pocket, he brought out the order and gave it to her. From the pocket of her skirt she pulled out her glasses and put them on. Tomkins looked at her triumphantly as she read of the floor to be renewed at " No. 49." Mari examined the " 4 " with interest and came to the conclusion that Tomkins had altered the " 1 " to a " 4 " so that " No. 19 " became " No. 49."

She looked up from the paper straight into Tomkins' face and smiled most affably. She did not want to land him in trouble. Mari Jones was sporting. Her hand went into her skirt pocket again and she pulled out a similar paper. The ingratiating smile left Tomkins' face and David saw that he looked worried. Mari Jones said :

" Well, as I said before, there must be some mistake somewhere. I went to the colliery office this morning " (Tomkins was now really startled) " and the clerk looked up the copy of the order in his book and said that the number was " 19." A note of triumph

now crept into her voice, and she had much enjoyment in looking at the startled Tomkins. She went on :

" But there, clerks can make mistakes in making copies, so I asked him to give me a new order. Here it is " (handing it to Tomkins who was now white and thoroughly frightened) " and he said he'd cancel the other one, and ask for your copy back. Mind you, I didn't ask him to do *that*. I don't mind you getting your floor done, Tomkins bach, but I want you to have mine done as soon as possible."

Mari was really enjoying herself now, and turned towards David and gave him another wink. Tomkins thought it best to be silent, so she went on :

" You had the ace all right, Tomkins bach, but I happened to have the trump card for it. However, I won't let on that I've seen your ace, and I should think that you had better lose it. You don't want it now that I've given you the new order anyway."

Tomkins' face cleared a bit. He knew that she had beaten him, but he knew that she did not want to make trouble. He nodded assent.

As Mari was going, she turned and said very pleasantly :

" Oh, Tomkins bach, you'd better cut that hole for ventilation this time ; and I'd like you to put in one of those gratings *for me*. Stops cats going in to die under the floor, don't you know. Then I would like you to repair those bedroom ceilings next week *for me*. I want to get the house done right through because one of the boys is going to be married soon. Well, ta ta for now, Tomkins bach."

She nodded cheerfully to the dumb Tomkins as she departed. When she had gone, he let out a great gust of a sigh and with a chastened spirit and voice sent David with the new order to the contractor.

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Tomkins took it into his head to do a stretch of kerb dressing and laying in a side street of the Company houses. He had even insisted on doing it as a change from clearing drains. In this work he lacked experience and made a serious error.

The work which Tomkins started joyously ended badly, and his error simply shouted itself at every passer-by. Gradually Tomkins began to feel the pull of his native heath, and blamed the drains again.

As a matter of fact the drains were much better for he had installed large hogsheads of water at their terminations and by this means a periodical flushing with water kept the drains going much better.

It was David's job to arrange the filling and emptying of these improvised tanks. Somehow or another, the Water Company got to hear of this unauthorised use of water, and a letter from the Company to the colliery office put Tomkins " on the carpet "

again. The affair was settled by a regular payment for the water ; but Tomkins' pride was badly shaken in the process.

He was paid regularly for working on Saturday afternoons, which he claimed as his right for doing dirty work. (Extra payment for work of this kind became the custom in later years, and the employees termed it "dirty money !") With fifty-seven hours at ninepence, his wage was a regular £2 2s. 9d. a week. In his native place, he could hope to earn only two-thirds this amount as a jobbing mason.

Yet his martyrdom became more and more oppressive, so he sent his wife back to his native place to obtain a house, and this she did.

Then Tomkins told the gaffer that he wanted to "jack his job" and return there. The gaffer prevailed upon him not to be too precipitate, so Tomkins sent his wife and furniture to his newly acquired home, and took lodgings in the house he had vacated.

The lodgings increased Tomkins' troubles, and his back got so bad (!) that he asked the gaffer for a fortnight's holiday. These holidays were then without pay. This period was granted and as there was a vacancy for a boy at the foundry, David was to go there pending Tomkins' return.

So on a fine Saturday morning, Tomkins set out on the way to the Dare main railway station to catch a train to his native place. He asked David to help him to carry his bag up the hill from Gorlan, and David carried it nearly all the four miles journey to Dare. Tomkins was most kind and affable, to which mood David readily responded.

When they came into sight of Dare, they shook hands and parted. Perhaps Tomkins knew, but David certainly did not, that they would never see each other again.

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That brief year with Tomkins influenced David in many ways, and later a psychological study of the conditions under which Tomkins developed his martyrdom brought him the understanding of others.

Tomkins would probably have been much happier in a gang on a building job where he would be continuously employed. As it was, he had not matured in a good competitive environment. He had learnt his trade, but had not gathered that experience which ripens a man's skill and improves his reasoning faculties.

He had a standard of integrity which put him to attend most conscientiously to the drains and the roofs, much as he disliked the former. He was right in his contention that the tenants did not want him in their houses until after 9 a.m.

That he could have carried out more of the much-needed repairs is also evident, and with a certain standard of conscientiousness, it is probable that this lay upon his soul in secret. Yet he countered this with this defensive maxim :

" You always looks after number one first," and the conflict brought him misery rather than happiness.

In later years, David was to meet this unhappy martyrdom in persons who had really good jobs, but too many idle moments. Unlike the man busily occupied and tired enough at night to go to unbroken slumber, the half-idle man had too much time to brood over the alleged unkindness of fate, and he became morbidly unhappy in consequence !

Tomkins probably found his happiness in the greater industry necessitated by carrying out jobbing work on his own account. He then had to live on the proceeds of his own output and he may even have dispensed with the use of " Pilate's Pellets." At any rate, he lived to a ripe old age in his native village and was regarded as a well-known character.

CHAPTER XVII

THE COLLIERY FOUNDRY

THE following Monday morning found David making his way to the foundry on the pit-head. He carried his breakfast in an oval tin box and his tea in an enamelled can with a lid on it; this also served as a cup.

He was in good time and in front of him strode the tall, strong form of Mr. Benjamin, the Engineer. Those were the days when the gaffers gave their men examples in punctuality and regularity.

David was early and had to wait until others came to open the double doors which were in the centre of a long frontage. He was not strange to the place, for Tomkins had often sent him there with tools for sharpening.

The doors were opened and all were in their places when the 6.30 a.m. hooter sounded. This was a prelude to a bustling activity. Someone started up an engine and the whirr of shafts and pulleys set up a cheerful rhythm.

David went to the foreman, with whom he was to work, and he was shown how to start the fire on the elevated hearth with a piece of oily waste which was procured from the lamp-room.

There was a bustle of activity as colliers came to and fro in the process of having their Hardy patent pick blades sharpened and as the two shoeing smiths and their " strikers " got their kit together to go down the pits to shoe the horses.

David was given an 8 lbs. sledge hammer, and was shown how to hold it in order to " strike " properly. His " fire " was that of a bearded and oldish foreman who did the lightest smith-work in the foundry.

The lad now looked around him with a new interest. There were six fire-hearths along one end and the half of the adjoining side; at the other end were the engine, lathe, planer, and the punching and shearing machine.

It was a rough division, without any form of partition, of a long room into a smith shop and a fitting shop. As you came in through the doorway, the smith shop was on the left and the fitting shop on the right. On the left-hand side of the doorway stood the steam hammer. Directly in front of the doorway and approached through a smith's standing was another pair of double doors in the rear wall. On entering these rear doors bags of rivets of various sizes were to be seen. To the left was the rack for storing iron bars of various light sizes and to the right the door of the moulding shop. Although Gorlan did not make any iron castings, nearly all the brass and gunmetal castings were made in this moulding shop.

Along the walls of the foundry were numerous racks for holding various tools, including tongs of all sorts and sizes. At each smith's fire was a tub or tank for quenching hot iron.

The four windows of the foundry had no glass but iron bars, and they ranged on the same side as the entrance. On the fitting shop end a bench with two vices was fixed in front of the windows.

The 7 a.m. hooter meant that the morning bank was over and that laggards could turn back home. It also meant that the biggest bustle of the foundry was over until the return bank from 5 to 5.30 p.m. repeated it.

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The smiths were six in number and each smith had a striker. Each smith had also an allocation of tasks. The first smith made all the new horse-shoes, and the second smith repaired all the iron shafts and the attachments from shafts to trams, termed "guns." The third smith repaired the damaged iron trams, while the foreman straightened axles, cut spindles for tramway rollers and did much incidental work. The fifth smith was the deputy foreman, and, as he did the heaviest work of the foundry, he had the most senior boy striker. The sixth was the expert tool sharpener, and, as this did not provide him with sufficient work, he and his striker repaired trams as well. Near their fire was a large hearth with four blast-jets on which a damaged tram could be heated in order that it might be hammered back to its original shape.

The large bars of iron were stored in the open yard at the back of the foundry. Here all the scrap iron was deposited. Spare parts of engines and various forms of iron and steel equipment were also stored in the yard.

The hooter sounded again at 8.30 a.m. and those who lived fairly near the foundry went home for breakfast. Those from a greater distance, like David, went into the carpenters' shop, which abutted the smith shop, and, on an improvised seat in front of the fire, ate their breakfasts.

Messrooms for employees were unheard of in the mining valleys and the open-topped enclosures for sanitary accommodation were so crude and uncomfortable that there was no danger of the employees wasting time in them !

The hooter at 9 a.m. made them hurry back to their work, and between the hooters of 1 and 2 p.m. there was a complete exodus for the dinner-hour.

The 5.30 p.m. hooter sent them home, unless, as many of them did, they worked an extra quarter turn, when the 7 p.m. hooter was the signal. Working until 9 p.m. meant an extra half-turn. On Saturdays they worked until 2 p.m.

The foreman was rather gruff of manner, but of a kindly heart. He had put one of his several sons with Tomkins and his opinion of Tomkins was not high in consequence.

David was fourteen years of age. In Gorlan parlance he was "going on his fifteen," for youth's ambition is to project itself

into a greater age. As soon as a boy's birthday was over, then he was "going on" his next additional year.

The lad found the work and company of the men and other boys most congenial. The work was heavier, but that was nothing to compare with the continual rebuffs of Tomkins. His mother was quite pleased when he said that he wished to stay at the foundry and not go back to his former job.

To this Mr. Benjamin agreed, but David would have to return to Tomkins until he could be replaced.

Once a week David went to put the drain-flushing tanks in operation, and on one occasion he and William Prosser cleared a drain which was not a common source of trouble.

After a fortnight at the foundry David had a letter from Tomkins stating that he was also writing Mr. Benjamin and giving up his job. Another mason was appointed and David had to go with him for a month in order to show the newcomer the drains and their troubles. The newcomer was a very fine type of man, and David experienced some regret upon leaving him to return to the foundry. But the foundry, with its direct contact with many personalities, proved to be helpful to David in many ways, and he spent two of the happiest years of his life there.

He had more frequent contact with Derfel who brought his mandril "blade" into the smith shop to be sharpened. Derfel had left the top pit, which had a smith shop of its own, and had gone to the middle pit. This he said was cold and that even Hell with its heat offered some advantages!

When the news came of Tomkins leaving Gorlan for good, David had to stand some chaff during the breakfast half-hour. His predecessor with Tomkins said :

"This chap has killed poor old George Tomkins. His back may have been bad, but 'Pilate's Pellets'" (here they all laughed unsympathetically) "were putting him right until David Bowen here upset him. I think that old Tomkins' spirit must have been crushed somehow to give up a tidy little job like he had. He was doing just as he liked; he had no boss really, and yet he gives it up. He didn't talk of 'jacking his job' when I was with him."

An old carpenter looked at the speaker with a twinkle in his eye, and said :

"It shows that David here has done something no other one of you several boys could do. In your cases Tomkins got rid of you, but in David's case, he got rid of Tomkins!"

There was a good laugh at this for Tomkins was well known to all of them.

§

David and Derfel were going their peregrinations on a pay Saturday evening when they landed on the Gorlan Square. The Salvation Army, with a band of three or four instruments, were

holding their open-air service, as they did regularly every Saturday night.

There was a tacit challenge to the Gorlan Hotel and its customers in these open-air meetings, but there was no animosity whatever from the landlord or landlady of the hotel. When the uniformed collector of the Army came along with a tambourine for collection, the Gorlan Hotel was most ready in its contribution.

When David was much younger and lived nearby, it was quite usual on a pay-Saturday evening for many fighting couples to be turned out from the hotel and on to the square, but these fights were becoming less frequent.

Should the "Army" be there and the shouting of the crowd around a fight become too loud, the Army would sing their Gorlan slogan hymn :

"I will believe, I do believe,
That Jesus died for me ;
That on the cross He shed his blood,
And now He sets me free."

This they repeated—with the rattling tambourines helping to drown the noise of the conflict. When the fight was over and the bloodied combatants were helped home, the "Army" would go on with its service. Yes, the "Army" was fighting too, but with the confidence that all the blood-letting required of this world was fully paid on that Calvary Hill outside Jerusalem about two thousand years before.

The way the "Army" collected the funds essential to its far-reaching Christian activities was not without some humour.

The drum of the band would be placed in the centre of their circle, which always stood under the lamp on the square, and an appeal would be made for contributions. The surrounding crowd would throw coppers and small silver on the drum. This appealed strongly to the inebriated, and they would try out the steadiness of their own hands by pitching their coins on to the drum. Failure meant more effort, which pleased the "Army" very much.

Singing would be going on meanwhile, and at a lull in the coin throwing, one of the members would go to the drum, pick up any fallen coins and count the total. He or she would then say :

"Dear friends, we thank you most sincerely for your contributions. These are now four shillings and ninepence—surely you will make it up to five shillings."

Some coins would then be thrown on the drum, counted again, and then the further appeal :

"Dear friends, thank you very much. The sum is now five shillings and sevenpence. Surely you will help us by making it six shillings."

In this way the collection would go up in jumps to ten shillings. It was all done in rare good humour, and the two boys watched the process with some amusement.

As the two boys moved off, they saw a tipsy collier singing something to a small band of listeners. They drew near to find that he was singing a parody of one of the most popular hymns of the "Army." It went something like this :

" Oh ! 'Tis the Army, Salvation Army,
Stands on Gorlan Square ;
Place a ha'penny on the drum,
Singing 'sinners, will you come—
Another eleven-pence ha'penny
makes a bob !'"

They both laughed and went their way, but David was later to see the good work done by the Salvation Army in places other than Gorlan.

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As they drew away, Derfel said :

" Look here, David, Charlie Cantwr is getting up a small mixed choir for competing in our next chapel eisteddfod. The choir is training at the vestry of our chapel on Saturday evenings. Let's go there and listen to them."

David assented and they crept into the vestry where the choir was being put through its vocal endeavours by Mr. Charles James. He belonged to David's chapel and we have seen the part he played with the church collections.

As they got quietly into the seats at the back, a young couple hurried past them to join the choir. There were wide grins on the faces of the other members as the pair took up their places, and Charlie said :

" Look here, Dai Evans and Kate Jones, why can't you do your courting after choir practice and not before. Here we've been waiting for the both of you so that we could make a good start."

" Shopping us have been, mun," said Dai.

" Well," was the reply, " I hope that you shopped a wedding ring in order to put a stop to this old nonsense." (Laughter). Then addressing the choir : " The two pieces for the next eisteddfod in this chapel are "Sweet and Low" and "Drink to me only with thine eyes" and the schoolmaster is to be the adjudicator. We'll try out "Sweet and Low" first. Have you all got your copies with you ?" Here there was much shuffling of papers and the copies came up in front of the vocalists.

" Now I'll read out the verse to you so that you know how to pronounce them. And don't forget—' Dic Shon Dafydd ' will want to hear and understand every syllable."

Here Dai interrupted :

" Don't you think that us can read English ?"

" No, I don't, Dai Evans," was the reply, " when we were practising 'Rocked in the cradle of the deep' last year, you, yes you, Dai Evans, were singing 'Locked in the stable with the sheep' ;

and when we went around Gorlan as waits last Christmas, instead of singing ‘When shepherds watched their flocks by night,’ you were singing ‘When shepherds washed their frocks by night.’” (Laughter from the choir). “So just listen carefully to this and look at the words on your sheets as I read them out. We’ll only do the first of the two verses tonight.

“ ‘Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea ;
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea :
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me ;
While my little one,
While my pretty one sleeps.’

“Now you want to notice those ‘p’s’ and double ‘p’s’ on the music score of your copies. The accompanist shall play it right through first so that you get the hang of it and then he’ll give us the chord and off we go.”

With Charlie flourishing a rather new baton they started, but the baton came down with a sharp crack on to a wood ledge as a signal to stop. The conductor looked frowningly at one of the sopranos.

“Martha, gel, how on earth do you think that you’re going to sing with a big lollipop in your mouth. I can see it rolling about from here.”

The object of offence was discreetly emptied into a handkerchief and the baton swung into action once more. When they came to “Wind of the western sea,” Dai Evans’ voice roared out the line, and down came the baton with a crack again.

“What’s up with you, Dai Evans, can’t you see that ‘p’ on the score at that point?”

“Of course, mun,” was the ready answer.

“And what did you think it stands for?”

“‘P’ for power of course” was the reply.

“Oh! and what do you think the double ‘p’s’ are for?” was the further question.

“Double power, of course.”

The conductor looked Dai askance and with an air of resignation, said with stressed patience :

“Well, it doesn’t—see! ‘P’ stands for ‘pianissimo,’ which means that you are to sing softly—not shouting as you were doing; and the double ‘p’ means that you sing very softly. And you might as well remember that you are a *tenore-leggiere*—a light tenor, not a *tenore-robusto*—a robust tenor; so don’t go straining your beautiful voice and spoiling it.”

Charlie James was really quite pleased at this opportunity of airing his musical knowledge, and the male members of the choir winked at each other.

Once again they started, and Charlie let them go right through with it. Then he turned to Kate Jones and said :

"When you are singing, Kate Jones, just keep your eyes on your sheet and on me. Don't try to make eyes at Dai Evans as well. It's two eyes you've got, not three!" Then followed numerous injunctions to the choir collectively and individually, and once again the verse was sung right through. After repeating the verse a few times, the conductor drew a heavy sigh and said :

"Well, I suppose that's a start ; but we'll have to make a better shape of it or keep out of the eisteddfod altogether."

"Daft sort of song, I call it." said Dai Evans.

"Oh no, Dai Evans," was the reply "it is by our late poet laureate, Alfred Tennyson, and the tune is that of a slumber song by J. Barnby." Here he turned a waggish eye on Dai Evans and then looked at Kate Jones, and continued. "At the rate you and Kate are going on, it may be the most useful song you'll have learnt. We shall hear you singing this lullaby in the middle of the night yet, as you'll be walking back and fore, and the only one to go back to sleep under the influence of your *tenore-leggiero* voice will be Kate!"

Here they all laughed. These interruptions were not resented in any way. In fact, they gave a spice to the otherwise tedious repetitions of the choir practice.

The they went on to the next piece, and Charlie read out Ben Johnson's verse which they would sing to Mozart's tune :

*"Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine ;
Or leave a kiss within the cup,
And I'll not ask for wine ;
The thirst that from the soul doth rise,
Doth ask a drink divine :
But might I of Love's nectar sip,
I would not change for thine."*

Now Charlie James had spent a good bit of time with the schoolmaster to get his pronunciations correct, and beneath the banter of the choir practice there lay the earnest desire to sing and word properly and to carry off the prize at the eisteddfod. The listening boys, however, were only interested in the more humorous side of the business.

After the choir had listened to their conductor's recital of the verse, another wag named Tom Jones raised an objection. Tom was a total abstainer.

"This is a drinking song, isn't it ?"

" Well, what does it matter whether it is or no ? " asked Charlie.

" Well, it's against my principles," was the answer.

" Why ? Do you see yourself getting drunk by singing it ? "

" No, not that, but it may make me feel thirsty, and the Gorlan Hotel isn't far from here."

" Anything else worrying you before we start, Tom Jones ? The hotel won't close before eleven o'clock anyway, and it is only half-past eight yet."

" Well, I belong to the Rechabites " (a friendly society with total abstinence as a requirement of membership) " and I may be up before the lodge for singing this song."

This was entirely fictitious and the whole choir knew it, but Charlie said with mock commiseration : " Pore fellah ! and you may be up in the police court as well. We'll do all we can to help you, and to pay your fines, we'll even pinch the coppers out of our children's money-boxes ! "

After these sallies, which the two boys enjoyed very much, Charlie held up his baton and the choir came in with the accompaniment.

After singing four lines, they were stopped, started again and, stopping them at the second line Charlie said : " I thought as much. You, Dai Evans, don't listen to what I say ; instead of singing

' Drink to me only with *thine eyes*,'
you are singing

' Drink to me only with *thy nines*.'

" You must be thinking of having ' one over the eight,' and you and Tom Jones had better go off together when we finish here."

And so the singing and the banter went on until nine o'clock when they all trooped either home or went on shopping expeditions.

Derfel had added fresh matter to his repertoire of humour and the middle pit knew all about it on Monday.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DERFEL GETS CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT

DERFEL had word one Sunday that his "butty" was unwell and would not be able to follow his employment during the ensuing week. This meant that the fireman of the district might transfer him temporarily to a man of a rather churlish nature who could not keep a "butty." So Derfel decided to "appeal unto Caesar," and the Monday morning found him in his afternoon clothes outside the colliery offices.

These offices were single storey and comprised of three main rooms with a bedroom, bathroom and conveniences in the rear. The vestibule entered on the central office where the cashier, three clerks and an office boy were accommodated; all the accounting and rent-collecting of the three pits and nearly all the houses in Gorlan, as well as the traffic managing of the coal trucks were carried out with this small staff.

To the right and left of this general office were rooms which accommodated the management of the pits. Here the officials met in conclave and here the pit maps were available and kept up-to-date by a mine surveyor and an assistant.

The bedroom had lost its proper use as such when the bed had been cleared out by Tomkins and David only a year or so before. The bathroom contained a heavy bath made of glazed fire-clay and this was retained. In fact, the one-armed chief clerk, who wrote with his left hand after losing his right, was often seen at an early hour with towel thrown over his shoulder, making for what was a rare luxury in that period.

In days of mob-law it had been imperative at times that someone should sleep on the premises, but those dangerous-looking mobs were not in evidence since the Miners' Federation and its negotiating machinery were set up. The truncheons, with their leather wrist straps were still at the offices, and the schoolmaster had borrowed some of these when he held the school concert.

As Derfel hung around waiting for the arrival of the manager, he observed the refuse buckets which the cleaner had put outside for collection by one of the top-of-the-pit labourers. He saw some rats' tails sticking out of the refuse. These were reminders that the management paid 3d. for each tail, to help in combatting the rat menace. The rats were plentiful in the buildings on the surface and especially in the chaff-room and stables underground; they were all too frequent in the stables where they would enter the mangers and eat the corn and beans which had been added to the chaff. There was no official rat-catcher in Gorlan. In later

years a man was pointed out to David as being very wealthy ; it was alleged that his father had been rat-catcher to a group of collieries and it was hinted that after getting his 3d. per tail, he would frequent the refuse disposal point of the colliery offices and salvage the tails for further payment ! He was given the appellation of " Ianto Ratstails," which appeared to be suitable.

While Derfel waited three men arrived outside the offices singly and two appeared to be a bit anxious. Derfel knew very well that they were " stop-lamp men." They would have been away from work for several days, possibly a week, and their lamps would have been taken off the racks. They would then have asked the lampman about their lamps for they could not go down the pits without them. The lampman would state that he could not re-issue the lamps without written authority and that they had better see the manager. That meant returning home, changing into afternoon clothes and seeking an interview with the manager at the colliery office. In a sense, they were either discharged or suspended. This applied only to those who were inclined to stay away from work habitually.

Before the three men arrived, the mine surveyor entered the offices. He nodded to Derfel, who began to think what a nice job it was to be a mine surveyor. Mr. Potter was about thirty years of age and was not only qualified as mine surveyor but also as a colliery manager. He wore a heavy moustache, but no beard, and his cloth cap was worn with some dignity. His boots, cycling stockings, breeches and Norfolk jacket bespoke calculated care of dress without ostentation.

Mr. Potter was then unmarried, and lodged with the daughter of one of Gorlan's strong characters. The mine surveyor was one of the very few who took a sitting room and bedroom all to himself. When he first took the rooms he found that the landlady had decorated all the chairs in his room with embroidered anti-macassars, those relics of days when furniture had to be protected against the powder of wigs worn with tails. This powder came from " Macassar"—hence the term for protection from it—"anti-macassar." Mr. Potter found these to be a nuisance, for with any movement of the sitter in a chair, the anti-macassar would fall off.

Then as he sat to meals he could see on the wall right in front of him, the large framed black-and-white portrait of his landlady's father, Shon Cwmgorse, glowering at him from his stance upon the wall, and it got on his nerves. So he would collect all the anti-macassars, fold them and put them on one side. Then he would turn the face of Shon Cwmgorse towards the wall and feel distinctly happier after this performance.

When he returned to his rooms, all would have been replaced to their former positions. He would then repeat the performance, but in the end his landlady's persistence won, and possibly that was what drove him eventually to matrimony.

Shon Cwmgorse lived next door with a large family around him. He had several grown-up sons, while another married daughter, her husband and two children, also lived there. Their house had a back-kitchen with a bedroom over it, but it was still a mystery how they all slept in four comparatively small bedrooms. When David's father worked his first year in Gorlan (1891) and on those very houses, Shon Cwmgorse would come along and talk to him. His continual refrain was "Why are you building all these houses here, mun. The coal will be worked out in twenty years and these houses will be only houses for sheep."

His wife and daughter (Mr. Potter's landlady) would sally forth to do their shopping at 10 p.m. on a Saturday night. Some years previously they bought their meat at the butcher's shop where David was errand boy. The butcher knew that they would come and what they wanted so he kept it on one side for them. In days of meat rationing it is worth recording what went into the house of Shon Cwmgorse on a Saturday night, for David had to carry the heavy load. They took the whole of the rump of a side of beef, which weighed about nine pounds; then they had two shoulders of pork, about five pounds weight each, and five pounds of sausages. The latter were consumed at breakfast the following Sunday morning. In those days, one man would consume a pound or more of steak at a sitting and think nothing of it.

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At last Mr. Lewis, the manager, came along and the little party pressed forward. He told them that he would see them in turn after discussing some matter with the mine surveyor. Much to his surprise, Derfel was called first. He found Mr. Lewis and Mr. Potter seated side by side at a table.

Mr. Lewis was a typical colliery manager of that period. He was in the late fifties, of medium height, had a cropped and greying beard and a pair of strong blue eyes. The managers, as a rule, had worked themselves to their positions from the coal-face. Their singular intelligence and their capacity to study for the mining manager's certificates gave them a rightful superiority. They knew their work in all its facets—and, what was very important, the men under them were aware of this. As a rule, they had come to the management staff from other districts. During any disputes with the men this saved them from being told that they had come to Gorlan with their toes protruding from their boots, or without shirts to their backs! They made it a point to know all the workmen personally and there was quite a democratic interchange of views between the managers and the men. It was hard luck on the fireman who had been promoted to be overman that his wife went to a boot shop and stated that she wanted to buy a pair of *overman's* boots for her husband! That was something that democratic Gorlan never forgot.

"Well, Derfel," said Mr. Lewis, "why aren't you in the pit this morning?"

Derfel stated his case, taking care to omit any reference to the man working without a mate in his district.

"Let's see," said the manager, turning to the mine surveyor, "isn't the overman of that pit to be here later this morning? Yes, I thought so. Well, Derfel, you'd better sit on that chair in the corner of the room until he comes. Mr. Potter, please get someone to fetch in one of those rapscallions outside."

A tall thinnish man wearing a moustache, a bowler and a seedy suit entered. He took off his hat and greeted the manager— "Good-morning, sir." The manager raised his eye-brows at that "sir," but asked sternly

"Where were you all last week, Bob Rosser? How do you think that we can keep these pits going if everybody's like you?"

Now Bob Rosser had been on a week's booze, but was a good worker: he lodged at Gorlan and had a family in one of the port towns. One of his sons came to great distinction later as a footballer. His answer surprised the manager.

"You couldn't at all, at all, sir. I wouldn't blame you, sir, if you was to give me the sack. I know that it's the likes o' me what makes it hard for the likes o' you. But I want another chance, sir. I've a large family and they've a poor father—and that's a fact, sir."

The manager hardly knew what to do with this line of agreement, so he fell back on his scripture quotations, of which he had many, as was not unusual then.

"Well, Bob Rosser, I see that you agree with Solomon's saying 'A soft answer turneth away wrath, but a grievous word stirreth up anger.' But, where were you last week? Were you ill?"

"No, sir; to be quite straight with a gentleman like you sir, I was on the booze—more's the pity. I spends my pay in the Gorlan Hotel, sir, instead of sending it to my poor wife, and I wasn't cutting coal in that hotel, sir, was I? No, sir, I'm a rotten sort o' cove, sir, and I don't deserve your help in my trouble, sir; but I wants to earn a bit of money again now, sir. It's only a gentleman o' the likes o' you what can forgive me, sir. Not that I blames you, sir, if you give me the sack."

Now what could the manager say to that? He fell back on scripture quotations again. He wrote out a "lamp-issue ticket" and handed it to Bob saying, "Well, here's another chance for you. 'Go, and sin no more.'"

Bob thanked him profusely and went out happily. Mr. Potter burst out laughing and said: "Took the wind out of our sails completely."

"Yes," was the smiling answer, "Bob Rosser's a really good worker and we get absolutely no trouble with him other than these bouts of drinking. He told someone in the pit that he's really happy only when he's drunk. Well, there it is. I feel sorry for

his wife and family who were waiting for the money he should have sent them a week last Saturday. "Now who's next?"

He went to the bow window of the room and looked out. Then he said :

"Derfel, fetch Ezra Evans in and we'll leave that old reprobate Job Morgan to the last."

The second culprit appeared on the scene. He was of medium height and, unlike Bob Rosser's springy step, his entry was rather listless and apathetic. He had sandy hair and moustache. He made no greeting and the manager addressed him :

"You were away the latter half of last week again, Ezra Evans. You're making a habit of it since your two sons are working with us. We keep only *workers* in the Gorlan pits, remember, and we've no room for wasters here."

"I wasn't feeling well, Mr. Lewis," was the reply, "my back is bad on times."

"Did you see Dr. Edwards?"

"No, he can do nothing for me."

"The fact of it is, Ezra, that you're lazy. Gorlan doesn't want lazy people. You've got a good hard-working wife. When she married you, she was told that if she kept the floor clean, you would keep the pantry clean. And you're doing it all right. You know what the scripture says : 'He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand ; But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.'"

He paused, but the culprit felt that silence was best and made no reply. The manager thought to himself. "If I suspend him for a few days as punishment, he'll be delighted with another holiday. If I stop him altogether he'll live on the earnings of the two boys. Good boys too, more like their mother than their father." He sighed, reached for the little pad and filled another lamp ticket. This he gave to Ezra saying "The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish ; and your wife, Ezra Evans, is a hard-working, striving and righteous woman. Your boys are worthy of their mother. Pull yourself together, and there's one more chance for you."

Ezra Evans muttered a word of thanks and departed. The manager shook his head sadly. "I don't like lazy people," he said.

The last delinquent was fetched. He hopped into the room in a lively manner, and greeted the manager cheerily as though they were old and bosom friends. He was dressed seedily, but his bright blue eyes danced merrily and were set in a round cheery face. He was clean shaven and about sixty years of age. He too, had several sons working. In fact, one of them, after having his foot crushed in a fall in the pit, had opened up as a cobbler and was doing very well. That was why they lived in a house near the Gorlan Hotel, and it was he who bought the top hat from B. D. Long and Son.

Old Job Morgan was a proper old reprobate and his wife and

children put up with a lot. On one occasion, when he was home on a week's spree, his wife put him to bed, took all his clothes away, and locked the bedroom door. Then she went back to work content to think that he was safe in the house at any rate.

In about an hour's time, a friend of the family called to see her. He said :

" Do you know where Job is ? "

" Of course ; he is safe and sound in the bedroom," she replied grimly.

The caller grinned and said, " I wouldn't be too sure of that. You'll find him in the Gorlan Hotel."

And there he was ; he had found his son's top hat in the bandbox under the bed. Wearing this and a blanket from the bed, he had climbed out of the window and down a rainwater pipe. Then in this spectacular garb he walked bare-footed along the street and joined up with his hilarious cronies in the bar of the Gorlan Hotel.

The manager knew that he had a tough nut to crack in Job Morgan. He began :

" You've been ' looking on the wine when it is red ' again, Job Morgan."

" Not at all, Mr. Lewis," was the ready and cheerful reply. " No red wine for me, thank you. Beer's my fav'rite drink, Mr. Lewis, and plenty of it."

" Well, where were you all last week, Job Morgan ? "

" Celebratin', Mr. Lewis, celebratin'. I went to see the match in Cardiff a week last Saturday, and Wales won the Rugby International. Just think of that, Mr. Lewis. How could I be a true Welshman without celebratin' that event ? "

" Wasn't Saturday enough for that ? " asked the manager.

" No, Mr. Lewis bach. A Saturday is enough to celebrate our Gorlan team winnin', but for the Welsh team and the international—the international, Mr. Lewis. No, Job Morgan is a Welshman to the core (*i'r carn*) and it was worth a week's celebratin' anyway."

The manager felt the futility of arguing with the old reprobate but he felt that Job Morgan should not get away with it as easily as that. Also one of the sons had carried a message from his mother that the manager should give Job Morgan a good talking to.

He braced himself to the effort, while the surveyor found some excuse or other to be pottering around the room to hide his smile and to avoid laughing outright. Derfel was in his element listening to all this. The manager tried a new tack :

" Well, if it wasn't the international, it would be something else, Job Morgan. I don't know how many times you've been here like this and Solomon said ' Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth correction.' If you—"

" Ah, come now, Mr. Lewis," Job interrupted, " be fair ; it's not like you not to be fair. That proverb goes on to say,

'but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.' And I like the honour of your reproof, Mr. Lewis bach. If I didn't kick over the traces now and agen, I wouldn't have the pleasure of meeting you like this. Solomon said also, 'Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee,' and I'm not a scorner and I wouldn't think of hating you, Mr. Lewis. Solomon went on to say 'Reprove a wise man and he will love thee,' and I *am* a wise man, Mr. Lewis, and every time I come here I love you more and more. Now, don't be too hard on old Job Morgan, Mr. Lewis."

The previous day he had been kept in bed to get himself sober. As the day wore on he had asked for a Bible, much to the family's surprise. Knowing the manager's aptitude for scripture quotations, especially from the Proverbs, he spent some useful time studying them.

The exhausted manager felt that he had made a mistake to go for quotations from the Old Testament, so he ventured into the New Testament.

"You must try to lead a better life, Job Morgan. You must try to seek the light, if it's only for your family's sake. The Master said 'Ask and it shall be given you'—"

"A pint of beer, Mr. Lewis," was Job's quick interjection. The manager went on ignoring the interruption :

"Seek and ye shall find"—"

"The money to pay for it, Mr. Lewis" was the second interjection which the manager again ignored and continued :

"Knock and it shall be opened unto you"—"

"The door of the blinkin' workhouse, Mr. Lewis. Aye, you're right there, Mr. Lewis."

Thinking that at last he was making an impression on the old reprobate the manager said :

"Now, look here, Job Morgan, your enemy is drink. I want you to be strong enough to say to the Devil as you pass the public-house, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'"

"That's what I do, Mr. Lewis, bach," was the ready rejoinder "that's what I do ; and he goes behind me and pushes me in."

The manager gave up the unequal contest and reached for the pad of lamp tickets once again.

§

Job Morgan's triumphal exit was followed by the entry of the overman. The manager turned Derfel over to him, and the boy was reproved for not being in the pit that morning. A doorboy in another district of the pit had sent word that he had been instructed by Dr. Edwards to stay home for a week while he and his lungs were kept under observation. There was no colliery or any other form of hospital in Gorlan.

Because Derfel had not turned up, the overman had been obliged to put a man to do a boy's job of looking after the door, and the overman was distinctly annoyed about it. Now Derfel,

after knowing what hard work it was to be assisting a collier in a *talcen*, rather envied the easy tasks of those doorboys, and readily agreed to do that job for the rest of the week. So the overman told him sternly.

"Now, look here, Derfel, don't you go thinking that door-keeping is a job to be taken lightly, and don't go to sleep at it as some boys do. Keeping those doors shut means that we're able to send the air around the Western district and to get rid of the gas there. You've to open that door to let anyone pass, and to let the *journeys* (of trams) through, but not to leave the door open more often than you can help. Then I want you keep an eye on the loaded *journeys*. They are pulled out by the hauling engine and they travel up a gradient."

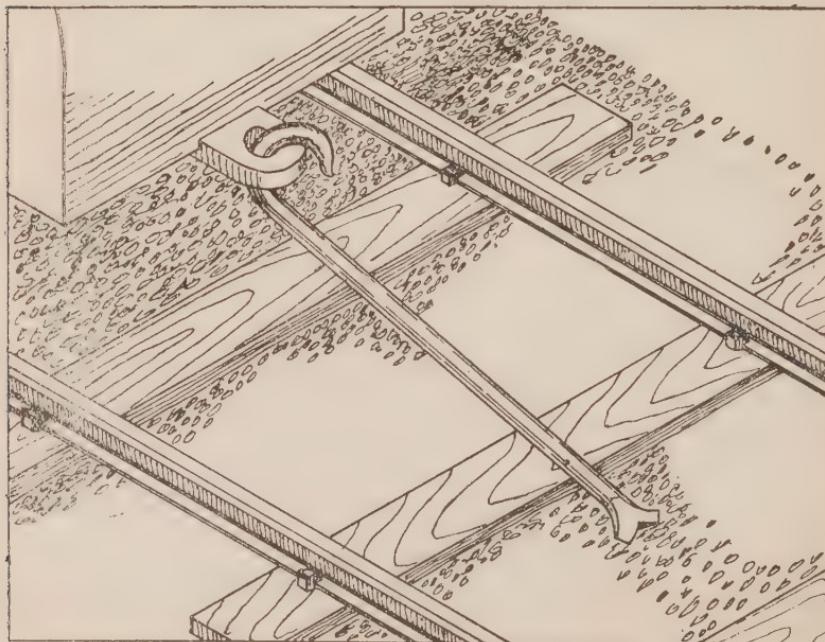
"Which means that the barhook must be on the tail of the last tram" interjected the intelligent Derfel. The overman was pleased.

"That's right, Derfel bach—I see that you've something in your head besides sawdust." (Dolls were stuffed with sawdust in those days). "If a shackle between those trams breaks, or the shackle-pin jumps out, the trams will run back and do a lot of damage."

"I know," said Derfel, "and someone might be hurt or killed."

"Yes," added the overman, "if the journey-man does not put the barhook on the end of the journey, that's what happens."

Derfel nodded. The bar-hook, as its name implies, was a bar of iron with a hook at one end. This hook was hung on to the



protruding hitching plate of the last tram, and the other end, with a forked chisel point, trailed on the rail-track. If a portion of the journey became detached, the weight would come on to the bar-hook ; this would stick against a sleeper in the track, and either stop the trams on the rails, or, as was most usual, form an obstruction and throw the trams off the rails so that they did not go careering madly on the down-slope rails.

§

The following day found Derfel gleefully installed in his new job. It was jolly at the outset when the men and horses were passing through to the further galleries. Derfel took and returned the banter of the passers-by and he was kept busy for an hour or so.

Then he was alone, and Derfel found that to be alone was a new experience for him. In a while the darkness, silence and loneliness became oppressive to him. His only light was that of the feeble flame of his safety lamp. Unlike David, who could live within himself, and whose thoughts and reasonings left him never wholly alone, Derfel was a very sociable animal. But that meant he must have someone to be sociable with. Now, down in the darkness of the earth and in the long and silent caverns, Derfel missed that sociability and he felt as though he was in the presence of a great and over-powering evil spirit. His soul felt some great dread and he found himself shivering with terror. Unbidden tears came to his eyes and he let out a groan. With an effort he pulled himself together ; but still that awful lonely silence. Would it never end ?

As though in answer to a prayer, he heard a squeak. He jumped and then realised that it was the noise of a mouse. There were plenty of mice in the pits, but they had to keep away from the rats in the stables and other places. Derfel took his lamp from its hook and shone its pale light around the floor. There in a corner of the man-hole in the wall that gave him shelter, he first saw his lamp's reflection in two small beady eyes. They did not move, but watched him and as his eyes strained through the gloom he could see the grey form of the mouse. It appeared quite unafraid.

Derfel's soul, released from its oppression of loneliness, sang with joy to see that little companion of his solitude. He took up his food tin and got a piece of bread and a bit of cheese and threw them gently to his waiting friend. Then followed a squeak of thanks, or warning, and three or four mice were soon around the food. Derfel watched them noiselessly and with the knowledge of their presence that oppressive loneliness never returned to him.

The overman came along on his rounds and had a few words with Derfel. Then came a haulier with a horse that had been shod that morning at the stables, and the journeys began to travel back and fore. Life, with all the interest of activity, came back

to Derfel, but he registered a vow that he would return to the *talcens* with their sociability as soon as he could.

Mid-day, Derfel ate his food and drank his cold tea and did not forget to keep some rations to give to his tiny friends before he left.

Not long after that he found some kind of special call taking place with the *journeys* and concluded that one of the customary accidents had taken place at the coal face. A haulier drawing an empty tram came out of the Western district and some men walked beside the tram. They stopped near Derfel and they were waiting to hitch the tram to a *journey*. So the curious lad strode over to see the contents of the tram.

There, laid and supported by another collier amongst the sackets of several colliers was a man who appeared in an agony of pain. David asked one of the men what was the matter with the patient, but was told that no one knew and that they could get nothing but groans from the man in the tram. He had been rolling his eyes in agony, but he seemed to be getting better.

In the *talcen* where the man worked, a cry had gone up and the ever-ready and helpful colliers around had dashed to the spot to find this man rolling on the ground in great agony. They could see no trace of a fall and the other man of the *talcen* was as surprised as the new-comers to see his butty in that condition.

However, clothes were laid in the empty tram and the patient carried and laid gently. One of them went into the tram first in order to act as an additional cushion. Any questions to the suffering man brought only eye-rolling and groans.

Derfel saw the tram hitched to a *journey* and sent on its way to the bottom of the pit and from there it was taken to the surface. Then the patient was gently laid on a stretcher and carried home by four men ; but no word came from the patient. An incident like this dislocated the work of the pit, and put the sympathetic colliers into personal loss.

Dr. Edwards was called and the patient by this time had recovered the use of his limbs in the fresh air ; his limbs, but not his tongue. So Dr. Edwards gave him an emetic and watched the result.

Then the cause of the trouble came to light. The patient had left rural employment in a Welsh county a few weeks previously. He saw his butty going occasionally to his jacket, take out a brass tobacco box, cut a chew of black twist tobacco and get much enjoyment out of the procedure. So unknown to the tobacco-chewer, the patient had gone surreptitiously to the tobacco box and done the same thing.

Not being used to it, the result was what has already been described. When the sympathisers and helpers heard this they understood that obstinate silence and their anger was vociferous ; although it all turned to great laughter in Gorlan afterwards.

The culprit knew better than to return to the Gorlan pits for

he would never live down such an incident, and a derisive nick-name would inevitably be bestowed upon him. So he wisely shook the coal-dust of Gorlan off his feet and returned to his native fields.

§

Derfel got concerned about the bar-hooks for they were missing frequently. He knew before the *journey* reached him if it was on the journey or not. Its clank on the track was musical to Derfel, and the absence of this sound meant no bar-hook. He told the journey-man about it when he could, but was informed that the bar-hooks were not thrown into the empty *journeys* when they returned.

Along the rail-tracks a large quantity of fine coal-dust lay, and the *journey* with its steel hauling-rope and clanking bar-hook brought up a cloud of dust. Derfel did not like this lung-filling dust and in defence the journey-man said that the bar-hook was the chief cause of it.

Derfel's ears were getting acute to the various sounds of the *journey* before the end of the week. If the *journey* was without a bar-hook, his ears would follow the sound of the *journey* until it topped the slope in the distance.

On the Friday afternoon and with the last *journey* having passed without a bar-hook, Derfel thought of the men and horses which were making their way towards him and at some distance down the slope of the incline. His ears followed the sound of the *journey* on its way after it left him. He left the door open until he could hear the *journey* going into safety. But before it reached safety he heard a strange noise. As quickly as he could, he threw a loose sleeper across the rails below the doorway and dashed into the safety of the manhole. He was not a moment too soon. From the feeble light of his suspended lamp, he saw two loaded trams hurtling down the track. They met the sleeper, jumped the rails, and came to a standstill about twenty yards further on.

Derfel was scared stiff, and took his lamp to inspect the ruin. A few minutes later some colliers came up the slope and the overman with them. They saw the tangle of the trams and coal and they had to crawl over them. The overman asked Derfel what had happened and the latter told him what he had done. The overman lifted his lamp to Derfel's scared face and said :

" You're a good lad, Derfel bach ; but for you and your sleeper, we wouldn't be here alive. No, nor the men and horses further back either. But tell me, how did you come by that sleeper ? "

" Well," was the slow rejoinder, " I thought a sleeper might be handy, so as a tram of sleepers passed me one day, I pinched one of them."

The overman laughed.

"Theft in the pit," he said, "the manager shall hear of this and like old Job Morgan you'll be up on the carpet. You'd better look up the book of Proverbs, Derfel bach, and then you may get out of trouble just like old Job Morgan."

Of course he was only teasing Derfel, but later the manager did send for Derfel and warmly complimented him on his exploit. It appeared that in another pit in another valley, an accident like that had killed two men, three horses and injured another four men. The manager felt that the occasion deserved a scriptural quotation. He said to Derfel: "That was wise of you, Derfel, to keep that sleeper by you. The Old Book says—

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.
For the merchandise of it is better than
 the merchandise of silver
And the gain thereof than fine gold."

As the complimented Derfel passed out through the accounting office, he thought that some "fine gold" in the shape of a golden sovereign would have been very acceptable. When he got his pay ticket as door-boy he found that the manager had shared his unspoken opinion.

CHAPTER XIX

FOUNDRY FACTS AND HUMOUR

ON the first anniversary of starting work with Tomkins, David found himself fully installed at the Foundry. Here discussions on national events were frequent.

With the Treaty of Pretoria of May 30th, 1902, the Boer War had come to its desultory end, and the volunteers from Gorlan were returning home. While patriotism was at its height David Lloyd George, who opposed the war, had the audacity to go to address a meeting in the Birmingham stronghold of the Chamberlains. The result was pandemonium. Windows were broken and the platform stormed, while Lloyd George had to shelter in a committee room. The crowd wanted the blood of this unpatriotic (?) member of Parliament for Caernarvon Boroughs, and he escaped in the disguise of a policeman !

Winston Churchill had returned to this country from his exploits in South Africa and was finding his feet as a parliamentarian. He was then the Conservative member for Oldham and later (1904) joined the Liberals. This started a long association with Lloyd George and the two future War Prime Ministers became good friends.

In the world of sport, Dr. W. G. Grace's long and unique supremacy in cricket was giving way to that of a young Indian prince named Ranjitsinhji. A young athlete named C. B. Fry had achieved rare distinction as an all-round athlete ; he had won a triple blue at Oxford, excelled as a cricketer, association footballer, and broke the record for high jumping. Jim Corbett, known as " Gentleman Jim " had won the world championship in boxing. All these notable sporting events were followed with avid interest in Gorlan, and pictures of the events which appeared in weekly and monthly periodicals remained as ineffaceable memories in the minds of boys like David and Derfel.

In the eisteddfodic world a young journalist named T. Gwynn Jones had won the national chair at Bangor with an ode of remarkable merit. The subject was " The Passing of Arthur," and the chief adjudicator, John Morris Jones, the Welsh professor at the Bangor University College, who had done so much for the orthography of his language, had been entranced with the merit of this new word-master.

At the same National Eisteddfod (1902), the chief choral competition had gone for the second time in succession to the English choir of North Staffordshire. They won the same competition in 1904, 1906 and 1910 and set up a record in this way.

The chief event of David's first working year proved a disappointment. It was the coronation of King Edward VII in

the June of 1902. Gorlan went all-out for this event and the celebration activities kept the village in a state of lively interest. This was the first event of its kind since Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, and all the more exciting in consequence. The King had to be operated on for appendicitis and the coronation ceremony was postponed until August. But the Gorlan committee had made all arrangements for a complete holiday in June and stuck to their programme. Teas and coronation mugs were given to the children, followed by sports on the tip field. At night, fireworks were let off and some of the returning sticks of the rockets crashed through the glass roof of the railway station. How the destruction-loving boys rejoiced to listen to that crash of breaking glass !

For the coronation, Elgar had composed the music of "Land of Hope and Glory," and the words were written by Arthur Christopher Benson.

The school-master got the children to sing their national songs, which included "God Bless the Prince of Wales." David first learnt this song from hearing it and he thought that the line—

"We'll make the *prayer re-echo* "

was

"We'll make the *prairie echo* !"

In the same way other boys sang for

"The *Campbells* are coming, O ho, Oh ho."

"The *Camels* are coming, O ho, Oh ho."

The subjects of the realm were getting well used to singing "God save the *King*" instead of "God save the *Queen*," although the older inhabitants still found the change unnatural somehow. The railways stations of this period had in their waiting rooms the coloured prints of two large liners. They were the "Campania" and "Lucania" of the Cunard White Star Line of Liverpool. These two ships had made record voyages across the Atlantic during the previous decade, bringing the times of the single voyages down to five-and-a-half days. The daily papers advertised their sailings as well as those of their sister ships : "Eturia," "Imbria," "Ivernia," "Vittonia" and "Sylvania." The single fares from Liverpool to New York or Boston were : Saloon from £10 ; 2nd class, £8 ; and 3rd class, £6. Those were days of emigrating, and pictures of the rich wheat fields of Canada and America were advertised by means of illustrations.

Gorlan felt itself linked with these ocean-going liners, for it was authentically reported that they made their records with the use of South Wales coal. Later the popular "Mauretania" brought the record to four-and-a-half days, and this by using South Wales coal almost entirely.

In the world of theatres, Martin Harvey was on tour acting the part of "Sidney Carton" in "The Only Way," and echoes of this great drama of the French Revolution reverberated in Gorlan. Early in 1901, J. Forbes-Robertson made his first visit to South

Wales and played *Hamlet* with great success. His wife, Gertrude Elliot, played the part of Ophelia. Sir Henry Irving (1838—1905) was over sixty years of age, and was making his final appearances in “Faust” and “The Merchant of Venice” at the Lyceum in London.

Ellen Terry (1848—1928), who had played opposite Irving for many years, was still on the stage and with Mrs. Kendal appeared in the “Merry Wives of Windsor” with Beerholm Tree at His Majesty’s Theatre in London. Fred Terry, brother of Ellen Terry, and his wife, Julia Neilson, became much talked of in Gorlan for their acting in the “Scarlet Pimpernel.”

In the world of the Music Halls, Gorlan came to talk about Harry Lauder, who was then becoming popular with Scottish songs of his own composing. Dan Leno (1860—1904) was still holding a leading position, and his quaint humour was quoted in the mining valleys, as well as that of Marie Lloyd. The name of George Robey was also attracting interest which developed into much popularity in later years.

Sir Thomas Lipton was vainly trying to bring the blue ribbon of the yachting world back to this country from America with his yacht “The Shamrock.”

Count Tolstoy (1828—1910) the great Russian novelist, social reformer and religious teacher, who had taken part in the Crimean War, had renounced his wealth and lived the life of a simple peasant. He was then digging his own potatoes, chopping wood, cooking his own food and even making his own boots. He was then a prophet in his own country, but the Czar and the ruling classes would not listen to him. The students were in revolt there and the Russian Nihilist, or revolutionary Socialist, was the subject of stories in the boys’ weekly papers in Gorlan and elsewhere.

The world of theology was of great interest to the Gorlan chapel-goers, and the older theologians were challenged by the younger school of academic men like Witton Davies and Gwili Jenkins. These religious controversies were the causes of much debate in all parts of the mining valleys, and the South Walian is in his element with controversial matters.

The missionary field held many Welshmen of distinction at that time. Some of them were learning the languages of the natives and translating the scriptures so that they could be understood. Timothy Richard (1845—1919) was in China and had survived the Boxer Rising of 1900, which, with its fervent nationalisation and hatred of “foreign devils,” killed a large number of missionaries.

Timothy Richard, whose youth had been spent in a humble home in Carmarthenshire, became a great power of influence in China. This was recognised by the Emperor, who sent the Prime Minister to Timothy Lee (as the Chinese named him) to invite him to become the Emperor’s adviser. But Timothy Richard had

sworn allegiance to another Sovereign and would not leave his missionary work. The Prime Minister asked him to write down in brief what were the changes he thought necessary to put China abreast of the greatest nations of the earth. Richard took up his brush-pen and wrote in Chinese characters :

1. Educational Reform.
2. Economic Reform.
3. Internal and International Peace.
4. Spiritual Regeneration.

The great country of Russia had Tolstoy, and the large and ancient Empire of China had Timothy Richard ; but prophets with real vision are seldom listened to by ruling classes. We have since seen what happened in both Russia and China.

David remembered how earlier, Hughes, the missionary of Colwyn Bay, brought native boys from Congo to Wales in order to educate them. His book "Dark Africa and the Way Out" was at the Bowens' home.

The new town hall and law courts were being built on Cathays Park, Cardiff, and in that way one of the finest civic centres in the world grew up with David's generation.

Some astronomers were watching the planet Mars and were stating that the inhabitants of that planet were trying to communicate with the Earth. That Mars, the God of War, *did* communicate his destructive activities some years later is now an unfortunate fact of history !

Marconi, the Italian scientist and inventor, had discovered the use of wireless telegraphy, and was sending messages across the Atlantic.

The century had begun with two colliery disasters near Caerphilly which involved loss of life. An explosion had taken place at the Universal Colliery, Senghenydd, which entombed men and killed eighty-two. Another (again in 1901) had occurred in Llandradach with a loss of eight lives and many were burnt and injured.

The explosion in Gorlan in 1885 (about seven years after the pits were sunk), with a loss of eighty-one miners, was still fresh in the minds of the older Gorlanites, while that of Tylorstown, with a loss of fifty-seven lives in 1896 was within the memory of nearly all of them.

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Such was the world in which the Gronfa Valley was set and David Peter Bowen was set in Gorlan. His work in the foundry was most interesting. There was always novelty and plenty to see and learn. With six smiths, six strikers and three fitters, all doing various allocations of work, and these allocations in themselves somewhat varied, there never was a dull moment in the place.

Then there was the social contact of it all. The smiths and fitters were, without exception, men of good artisan class and of good principles. They were a jolly lot as well, and gave and received the ready humour of those happy days. The boys were full of mischief and played endless tricks on each other. The foreman frowned on these antics, but two of the smiths were full of mischief themselves and covertly helped the boys in their pranks.

David received two shillings a day, plus the percentage of the sliding scale, which then brought it to about three shillings. With some extra time he was able to take home to his mother two yellow sovereigns a fortnight. The basic rates for the boys in the smithy shop were 2/-, 2/2d., 2/4d., and 2/6d. a day according to the positions they held as strikers in the foundry.

After David had been back in the foundry for a month, the foreman fell ill. In such circumstances the striker was to make use of the fire and turn out small articles such as wedges for driving into mandril shafts, split pins, washers for tram axles and the like. David had an aptitude for this work and enjoyed it. It was also much lighter work than dressing stones. He began to make small tools as well.

Possibly some inherent streak came to light in this way for Cradoc Bowen's father and grandfather had followed the joint calling of farmer and blacksmith.

For a few days he took the place of the second shoer's striker, who was ill, and went down the two bottom mines. Here a round was made in the underground stables to see that the shoes of the horses were all right. Some old shoes were re-tacked and some replaced with the new shoes they carried and which the first shoer had forged. During mornings, they went down the pits at 6.30 a.m. and came up again at 9 a.m. In the evenings they went down at 4 p.m. and came up at 7 p.m. They had to carry safety lamps, and the striker held the light and handed the nails while the shoer secured the shoes to the horses' hooves.

The pit stables were white-washed annually, but after working in them it was difficult not to carry away what was known as "stable smell."

The horses were fine animals, and ill-treatment was severely dealt with when it occurred. They saw no daylight again once they were taken down the pits, unless some suspension of work brought them up again. David remembered the horses being brought up during the 1898 strike and put into fenced enclosures near the tip. The horses were wild with delight to see daylight and the fields again. They pounded along the grass in their heavy-footed way and rolled over and over in sheer ecstasy.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good," and that long and bitter struggle gave the horses six months of well deserved holiday.

The foreman's illness proved to be rather long and David had turned out a plentitude of the small articles he was making.

There were two journeymen boilermakers back and fore to the foundry and occasionally they would use David's fire to bend or forge the iron plates. They were patching one of the boilers which provided the machinery of the pits with steam.

They were two brothers and they travelled back and fore to Gorlan by train. The elder was long and thin and the younger was short and stout. One of the comic papers of that period ran serial pictures depicting the comical antics of a similarly contrasted pair. So these were dubbed "Weary Willie" and "Tired Tim," although they were genuinely hard workers. This was done covertly, for boilermakers were then reputed to be bad-tempered individuals. Jim and Tom were no exceptions to this rule, nor was it to be wondered at, when their difficulties of work was examined. It was heavy, awkward labour in cramped positions.

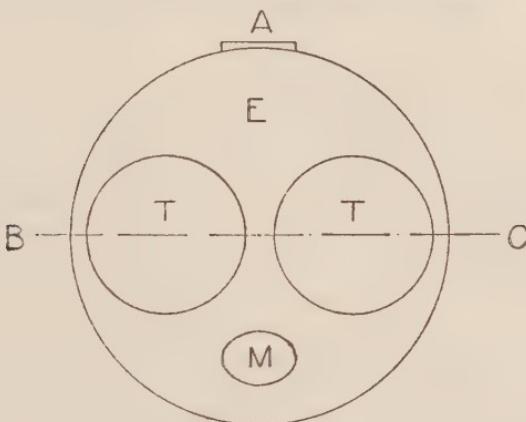
Mr. Benjamin came into the foundry one day and sent the tram repairer's striker, who was an adult and the brass founder, to the moulding shop to get his moulds ready for certain brass castings. Then he paired off David with Michael Jones, the tram-repairing smith, and instructed them to help the boilermakers to finish some boiler work.

When the rest of the foundry heard this, they did all they could to frighten David and Michael by stating what was in store for them. The two brothers were known to relieve themselves by punching each other a bit now and again; this was what the smiling eyes of the foundry staff told David and Michael they could expect to receive. David was to warm rivets, and all sorts of punishment were described to him if the rivets were not heated to the exact temperature. If they were too cold and could not be hammered properly into rivet-heads, then Jim and Tom would yell out "Are you painting them?" If the rivets were too hot, the "burnt" iron broke up under their hammers, and they would shout "Are you roasting them?"

The foundry staff resented the engineer's arrangement of sending a fully competent blacksmith to hold up rivets for these two boilermakers. To them it was a case of putting a trained artisan to do what was considered a labourer's job. The shouting and swearing which this holder-up got from the boilermakers was an added resentment. Michael Jones' predecessor "jacked his job" and went back to a country forge after doing this work. But the boilermakers insisted, somewhat unjustifiably, that a skilled blacksmith was necessary. In any case, it was a strong man's job.

By this time David had changed his little serge coat for a dungaree jacket which could be washed to free it of soot, oil and grease. Michael was similarly clothed, and to the accompaniment of broad grins and mock cheers, the two of them went off to the boilers.

Jim and Tom were very pleased to see them, and especially to have a pair of new helpers who bore them no grudge for past contacts ! The boiler was a long cylinder in a horizontal position with one end facing the stoke-hole. It was seven feet in diameter and in this was inserted a pair of tubes, or "chubes" as the boilermakers called them, each three feet diameter. The tubes took the fires and the surrounding boiler the water to make the steam. A cross section was something like this.



The boiler and tubes were built up of comparatively small plates which were held together with innumerable rivets. The boilermakers were renewing some of the burnt-out plates in the tubes.

When in use, firebars were put across the lower section of the tubes, and a firebox door was fitted, through which the coal was fed.

A small portable forge awaited them and David was shown, quite kindly, how to warm rivets. One rivet was placed in the hottest part of the fire and another two, one on each side, warming up in readiness for replacing the one extracted. They were iron rivets, three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and had to be heated until the surface of the end began to melt. If delay occurred, the melting rivet had to be discarded and another put in its place.

Michael's was the more difficult task. If the riveting was above the line B—C in the diagram then he would enter into his cramped position through the top of the boiler at A, but if below B—C then he had to crawl in through the manhole at M. He was armed with a rivet tongs in order to take the rivet passed to him by David. He would then insert it in the hole required, discard the tongs and bring an iron dolly against the head of the rivet. Jim and Tom sat cross-legged on sacking in the tube (T) and when Michael was ready with his dolly they would hammer the hot iron into the shape of a flattish cone. They had long-nosed hammers with handles about a foot long. With two hands to each handle they

would hammer the rivet strongly with a quick rhythm of tapping. Their light came largely from a paraffin tin teapot affair, with the wick coming through the spout. This was called a "comet" and it gave but poor light and much smoke.

With the water of the boiler being under pressure of 60 lbs. per square inch, it was imperative that each rivet should be soundly made, otherwise leakages into the furnace would occur. Apart from their cramped position of working, perhaps this essential accuracy of work frayed their nerves and made them irritable.

David fared very well with them. He did his work intelligently and never kept them waiting for rivets. Never once did they scold him and they even called him "our boy" quite affectionately.

Michael Jones was not so fortunate. He was not really deft enough for his awkward job. Firstly, he would fumble too much for the rivet which David passed him. Secondly he did not pass it into the hole quickly enough. Meanwhile the rivet was losing its proper heat. Thirdly, he would let the dolly slip so that the riveters would not have the unfailing resistance necessary for good riveting. These mishaps meant the rejection of rivets after they were inserted, or cutting them off after partially hammering them.

Such occasions were accompanied with yells of displeasure from the riveters, to which Michael, in his cramped, but safe, position would respond with equal vigour! After all, Michael had the honour of the foundry to safeguard, even in the matter of this wordy warfare!

The stokers of the neighbouring boilers were highly amused at these performances, and there seemed to be a rivalry between them as to who should work in the nearest proximity to the show! It was David alone who saw this.

When the suspensions occurred for meal-times and finishing, all was forgiven and forgotten, and the surprised David found all three on most affable terms with each other. He helped Michael by keeping his second rivet almost ready when he parted with the first. In this way there was not much delay.

They were working from the centre of the tubes upwards and after a week's work the riveting was drawing to a close. Now if the diagram on page 181 is examined it will be seen the easiest position for Michael's work was on the top of the tubes (E). On the other hand, this was the most difficult position for the riveters, for they had to hammer upwards—a very hard and difficult task. Michael told them on several occasions when he was struggling with the dolly on the lower positions that he would have the laugh over them when they reached the top.

He carried with him a cold black rivet in order to try out any doubtful holes. If the cold rivet would not pass through, then "drifting" or cutting was necessary before a hot rivet was passed through it. One day he picked up an additional rivet unknown to the riveters. He grinned at David when he did so, but said nothing. Later David when going, at Michael's request, to the

latter's pocket to get him a "chaw" of tobacco to cheer him in his cramped position, found this other rivet. It was now painted a brightest cream colour and, knowing that Michael had a craze for souvenirs, he mentioned the matter to no one.

The following day the job was completed and David passed in the last rivet which came on the topmost part of the tube. He stopped the bellows and looked into the tube to see the last rivet being hammered up. The tube was dark for the "comet" gave out a darkening smoke and but little light. The rivet came through followed by a shout from Michael that the dolly was in position.

The riveters, now tired with so much upward hammering, attacked the end of the rivet with a forced vigour, with Michael shouting encouragement from his now easy position above. Yells of disgusted anger followed for Michael had inserted his yellow-painted rivet, and had taken in the riveters completely!

When told this story, the foundry staff felt that their honour had been completely vindicated. The slogan hurled at the brothers for a long time was "Are you painting them?"

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David's first Christmas at the foundry was near at hand and the foreman was expected back after Christmas. So for a week or so he was mate to Michael Jones. They were now treated with much respect, and became very friendly with each other.

Apart from their proper work, one or two of the smiths and nearly all the boys carried on the business of supplying colliers with steel pins to hauliers, and sundry other small items for which they were expected to be paid. Michael referred to these as "foreign orders."

For home use, pokers were the great ambition of the boys, and all sorts of knobs were made to them in order to impress their parents. Michael, whose family was in Carmarthenshire, wished to go home for Christmas, and wanted to take a souvenir somewhat more substantial in character than his painted rivet. So, despite the head-shakings and waggish remarks of the other smiths, he decided upon making a really fine poker.

David stayed behind after hours to help him forge this ornamental fire-iron. Instead of a knob, he forged a proper handle which was eight-sided and rounded off at the top of it. Next day he showed it to the rest of the foundry and so ingratiating were the staff to the "hero of the painted rivet" that the fitters insisted on putting it in the lathe. With the due use of emery cloth, it shone to a wonderful lustre and when the delighted Michael saw it he said: "Jawch, mun! My wife will never use that now, she'll hang it up on the wall."

So in a humble home in Carmarthenshire, it was not a gleaming sword and scabbard that was seen above the mantelpiece, but a shining poker and a painted rivet, and these provided Michael with stories of his prowess for the rest of his days!

CHAPTER XX

THE GORLAN EISTEDDFOD

CHRISTMAS Day passed very quietly, with the people of Gorlan testing out the sizes and digestive capacities of their stomachs. Roasting geese were turned in front of the huge fires, later to be served up with potatoes and mashed and buttered parsnips. The traditional plum pudding followed, and the gorged families rested in order to come in strong on the Christmas cake at tea-time.

Now there might be little or no competition in Gorlan with regard to the poultry and plum pudding, but the Christmas cake found the households in all-out endeavour. Pieces were exchanged and sampled by the women-folk so that envy of successful accomplishments found the cakes becoming richer and richer at each succeeding Christmas. The addition of brandy while the cake was being made was becoming so prevalent that even the strictest total abstainers dared not object to the recipes of their competitive women-folk.

These cakes were put into large tins and taken to the bake-house in the centre of Gorlan. This was a dread time for the bake-house keeper, whose business was confined to baking for others only, and it was no wonder that he charged a penny for baking each cake instead of the three-farthings he charged for baking a loaf of bread. Although the plentitude of real butter used in the mixing ran out in melted grease on the oven floor, it was the brandy that caused him the greatest trouble. He swore that some of them put so much into the cake that it flowed out when baked and caught fire in his ovens. He said that it would be far more sensible of them to send him the brandy in a bottle rather than to send it in cake!

He also roasted meat and poultry on special occasions and the butchers sent tins of meat faggots to him as well.

That Christmas time, a butcher's boy was carrying a tin of meat faggots on his head and was making for the bake-house. He was met by a mischievous son of one of the blacksmiths, who drew a dagger and stuck it into the abdomen of the faggot-bearer. The latter glanced down to see the shining blade disappearing, and throwing down the laden tin, set up an awful howl and ran back to the shop, his hands tightly pressed against the spot of infliction.

He wailed out his tale of this murderous attack, but on examination to verify his story there was no trace of damage. His assailant had a tin dagger, and when used, the blade simply receded into the hollow handle of the weapon! The butcher claimed damages from the assailant's father, but the Gorlan records do not reveal that the faggots were paid for.

A year or two later David saw a man swallowing three short swords. Noticing that the handles of the swords were remarkably long, he came to the conclusion that the blades simply receded into the handles ! The story of the lost faggots of Gorlan helped him to this solution.

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Boxing Day came along and with it the Gorlan Eisteddfod which was held in Derfel's Chapel. So both boys went along to hear the competitions.

The chairman was the agent for the Gorlan Pits, while the eisteddfod conductor was Eos Gorlan. Mr. Davies, the school-master was the adjudicator for the musical items and someone from Maes-y-werin judged the recitations. The adjudicator for the literary compositions was Gorlan's best poet—a man who was a labourer working in the saw-mill on top of the pit.

The prizes were awarded in small bags which were suspended on loops of ribbon so that they could be hung around the necks of the successful competitors. They were of white or coloured silks and satins and were artistically made. The women-folk would come together before the eisteddfod and make them. Occasionally, these bags would be the subject of competition as well. They were hung in a prominent position at the back of the platform and within easy reach for use. These bags were prized as mementoes of eisteddfodic prowess and the number of bags a person had won indicated the possessor's merit in singing or recitation, etc. David thought that this was something like the way the Red Indian warriors prized the number of scalps they carried—often referred to at that time in the boys' papers.

One of the first items was the singing of "Larboard Watch"—a great favourite in those days. It was sung by competing quartettes and the chorus went like this :

" But who can speak the joy he feels
While o'er the foam his vessel reels,
And his tired eyelids slumbering fall,
He rouses at the welcome call
Of " Larboard Watch, Larboard Watch,
Larboard Watch, ahoy ! "

This song had been taught in the boys' school while the two boys were there, so they listened with interest to the school-master's adjudication of the efforts of three quartettes.

His big point was punctuation and two of the quartettes had slipped up at the end of the fourth line of the chorus. They had paused where they should not have done so ; they should have gone on to the first comma after the first " Larboard Watch."

He was dead against vocalists breaking up the sentences of songs and cited a hymn which was badly treated in this way, namely, " Lead, Kindly Light." He took the second verse and sang it

with the punctuation he wished to emphasise. During the pauses the vocalists were to take breath.

“ I was not ever thus, (*pause*), nor prayed (*no pause*)
 That Thou (*no pause*)
 Should’st lead me on ; (*pause*)
 I loved to choose and see my path ; (*pause*)
 But now (*no pause*)
 Lead Thou me on ;” (*pause*) etc.

Charles James and his choir listened to this adjudication with great interest. When it was over, the conductor signalled the choir to leave and outside he re-emphasized the whole subject. Adjudicators had their pet foibles and these had to be duly noted by the choirs.

When the choir went up to compete, David was surprised to see how different was their conduct from that which he saw at their choir practice. Gone was the railly and banter and they sang their two songs in grim earnest, their eyes watching every movement and signal of their conductor. It was a real pleasure to listen to their rendering of “ Sweet and Low ” and “ Drink to me only with thine eyes ” and the audience burst into loud clapping when they had finished. Three other choirs from other places competed against them, but they were awarded the first prize.

It was these small *eisteddfodau* that provided the rising talent for greater performances. The great choirs of the National Eisteddfod, the Crystal Palace, Caradog’s great choir and Madame Clara Novello’s choir, which had toured America with great success, picked their most promising voices from this local talent.

There was a good story in Gorlan a few years before this time about a Gorlan man who had joined an important choir to sing before Queen Victoria at Windsor. The old Queen’s own royal family, including the German Kaiser, her grandson, were present. This was considered a great honour in those days.

In Gorlan there was an old and smallish woman named Little Becca who was a character in the village and generally very poorly dressed. The Gorlan vocalist came back from his great experience at Windsor stating that the old Queen was the very image of Becca Fach ! The basis of comparison was Becca and not the august Queen Victoria !

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The competitions went on continuously and David and Derfel went home to tea. In the lobby on the way out they had the backs of their hands stamped with an eisteddfod mark. On showing this, they were enabled to pass in and out of the Eisteddfod without further payment. This was a passport which could not be transferred to others !

Derfel wanting a joke at the expense of the stamper, whom he knew quite well, said :

"How can I wash my hands now before I have my tea?"

The answer was prompt.

"You don't eat food with the *backs* of your hands, do you?"

They returned to hear some recitations in which they were much interested. One was "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and the reader is reminded of the difficulties of the Welsh with regard to English pronunciation. Welsh is a phonetic language and not so prone to inconsistencies as the English language. For instance, if "daughter" is pronounced *dawter*, then "laughter" should be *lawtter* according to the pronunciation of Welsh words.

The first contestant was a very tall, uncouth-looking man who had come to the eisteddfod from somewhere "down the valley." The first verse of Tennyson's poem (very popular at that time) is as follows :

" Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
' Forward the Light Brigade !
Charge for the guns ! ' he said.
Into the Valley of Death,
Rode the six hundred."

Eos Gorlan saw that the adjudicator was ready, and nodded to the contestant to commence. The latter brought his head forward, and his eyes into a heroic stare. Then he raised his right hand into a horizontal position and shouted :

" ' Alf a *legew*, 'alf a *legew*,
'Alf a *legew* onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six 'undred."

(Here the contestant bellowed the command)

" Forward the Light Brigade !
Charge for the guns ! " he said.

(Here he lowered his voice almost to a whisper)

" Into the valley of Death
Rode the six 'undred."

David, Derfel, and about two-thirds of the audience were nearly bursting with suppressed laughter. It was something which a Gorlan wag would do for the sheer fun of it, but the contestant seemed in dead earnest. The other third of the audience were registering in their minds that *league* was pronounced *legew*, but all the later contestants corrected this impression.

The reciter got to the third verse. Here he held up both hands in awe !

" Cannon to right of them,"

(Here he swung to the right)

" Cannon to left of them,"

(He reversed quickly to the left)

"Cannon in front of them"

(He swung to face the audience and glared)

"Volley'd and thund'red.

Stormed at with shot and shell,"

(Here he held up his arms to shelter his head)

"Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death"

(Here he thrust his right arm forward)

"Into the mouth of 'ell

Rode the six 'undred."

He was loudly cheered when he left the platform and his grim face relaxed into smiling appreciation. Needless to say, he did not win the prize, but the adjudicator, unlike many, let him down lightly and encouraged him to persevere.

The winner, also a stranger, gave a superb rendering of the last verse :

"When can their glory fade ?

O the wild charge they made !

All the world wonder'd.

Honour the charge they made !

Honour the Light Brigade,

Noble six hundred ! "

David thought of the noble-souled Lord Tredegar and how he had come through that terrible charge without hurt.

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The next item had three lots of competitors. It was the singing of "round song" by trios. The first two trios went on the usual rendering of "Three Blind Mice." This form of singing means that all three voices take up lines in turn until they are all singing different lines at the same time. The third trio was composed of three shop assistants in Gorlan and their nom-de-plume of "The Three Counter-jumpers" was called out. They struck a new and very effectual note in this type of song. Pointing accusing fingers at each other they sang in turn—

"'Twas you that kissed that pretty girl,
For I know who."

The second sang :

"Oh no, sir, oh no, sir,
But I know who."

The third sang :

"'Twas you sir, 'twas you sir,
You well know who."

After three repetitions, they changed over and another was accused, and in turn the first accuser became the accused.

It was superbly done, there was no false step at all, and they won the prize easily. When called forward, their spokesman

said that they were returning the prize to the funds of the eisteddfod and this was well applauded.

The awards for the literary competitions were announced and David clapped enthusiastically as Nemiah John went forward to pick up two prizes. One was for an essay and the other for a hymn. Both compositions were in Welsh. Since David had gone to work he had not seen so much of Nemiah as formerly, but the latter came to the smith-shop to have his pick-blade sharpened.

Eos Gorlan announced the next recitation. The prize was awarded by the agent, the chairman who had visited Beddgelert (the grave of Gelert) in North Wales during the previous summer. It was a long poem about Gelert, the faithful hound of Prince Llewelyn, and the verses were by W. R. Spencer. On account of its length, the competitors were permitted to abridge the recitation. There were two contestants. He called to the platform the first contestant of the "Charge of the Light Brigade." With many errors of pronunciation he went through every one of the twenty-three verses without a hitch. What a memory!

The story is well known and the first two verses are as follows :

The Spearman heard the bugle sound,
And cheerfully smiled the morn,
And many a brach and many a hound
Attend Llewelyn's horn.

Oh where does faithful Gelert roam ?
The flower of all his race !
So true, so brave ! a lamb at home,
A lion in the chase.

The sentiment in the poem was much appreciated in those days and even now Gelert's grave is visited by the many tourists who pass through Beddgelert. The tall competitor was warmly applauded and the next competitor called to the platform. The audience was surprised to find a small boy about eight years of age go up and face them. He said :

"Gelert, Llewelyn's Dog—Abridged,"

Then he went on slowly, but with good enunciation, pronunciation and emphasis ; making a very brief pause in the middle of each of the long lines.

"Llewelyn the prince—and Gelert the hound,
The first went a hunting—the other not found.
The chieftain returns—finds Gelert and blood,
But nowhere his baby—his anguish in flood—
He kills in his rage—the faithfulest hound ;
With Gelert's last yell—his heir is safe found—
And also a wolf—terrific in size
Which Gelert had slain—to Llewelyn's surprise.
Llewelyn remorseful—then buries the hound,
And mem'ries still cherish—that famed spot of ground."

A loud laugh went up as the little boy left the platform. After all, the permission given to competitors to abridge the poem made the little boy's rendering quite fair in the competition.

Eos Gorlan, the adjudicator, and the chairman drew together with much smiling. After a brief discussion, the latter put his hand into his pocket and handed a coin to Eos Gorlan, who then instructed an attendant to pass him two prize bags. Into each he placed a coin and called both competitors to the platform where they stood facing the audience. Eos Gorlan placed one hand on the tall competitor and said :

"Here we have the full measure." Then placing his other hand on the small boy, he added :

"And here we have the abridgement!"

The audience laughed as they enjoyed this eisteddfodic sally. When the laughter died down he said :

"The chairman is so impressed with the complete poem and the abridgement that we're able to give the full award to each of them." (Applause) He handed each a prize bag and went on :

"There's one thing further we would like them to do, that is to put these bags about each other's necks."

The tall figure and the little figure faced each other and after a slight hesitation the former placed the bag around the neck of the diminutive contestant and then picked him up so that their faces were on the same level. The little ceremony was completed amidst the gleeful clapping of the audience.

The competitions were numerous and the eisteddfod lasted from 2 p.m. until 11 p.m. Some were known to go on much later than this. David and Derfel left about 9 p.m. The Gorlan Eisteddfod was a thing of the past once more.

With reference to the sentimental in poems, such as "Gelert," this was to be found in most of the recitations and songs of that period. A good example is the following verse which used to move the singers and hearers to tears when the twentieth century was born :

"When you're going to the battle
With the foremost of your men,
Will you think of little Minnie,
Will you want to see her then?"

Two world wars brought a change and what moved those of fifty years ago is now often described as "sloppy." Values altered with the terrible increase of suffering and sacrifice occasioned by the two wars.

CHAPTER XXI

GORLAN FOUNDRY AGAIN—AND HAWKERS

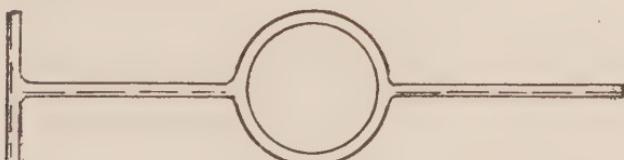
THE foreman returned to his fire and to David after Christmas, and the moulder got ready to pour the molten metal into his moulds. David was back and fore continually to watch the processes involved. The moulds for receiving the molten metal were made of sand and were broken up after use.

The moulder held a stock of wooden patterns, made to the exact shape of the metal casting required. When new types of castings were necessary, the carpenters made new patterns with punctilious care. They were of good yellow pine, free of knots, and sandpapered to a smooth surface. When the moulder received them, he made them smoother and non-absorbent by applying black-lead to the wood and shining them up with brushes.

The sand he had was very fine and of a reddish yellow colour. To this he mixed very fine coal dust which he procured from the beams above the coal screens. This enabled him with a little added moisture to have the sand moulds fair in shape and strong enough to hang together.

David found it fascinating to watch this moulder at work, and he was shown the intricacies of turning out brass castings.

The day came when all the moulds were ready, and the moulder needed help. The crucible containing the molten brass was in a furnace in the corner of the moulding shop. The sheet-iron top was removed and the deputy foreman, armed with a huge tongs and much strength, stood above the great heat of the furnace. He then lifted out the crucible and placed it into a horizontal crutch shaped like this—



The lip of the crucible was adjusted to a suitable position for pouring. The moulder held the tee-end of the crutch and David was given the other end of it. He was chaffed by the others that he was "getting round" the moulder all right to have had this honour.

The two then approached the moulds, and the moulder tilted the crucible by means of his tee-end of the crutch. It was a pretty sight to see the yellow metal flowing into the funnelled holes which had been made in the moulds to receive it.

In a very short time, the moulds were broken away, revealing the castings. These were then cleansed and scraped by the moulder and passed to the fitters. The latter, in turn, put them in the lathe or planer, or both, in turn, to bring them to the very precise dimensions required for their use in the machinery.

These latter processes David also watched, and his interest was rewarded by his being told how the finished article was turned out. Even the tough old fitter with a wooden leg began to take an interest in him and answered his many questions.

Tomkins had resented David's questions, but these men respected them, and in that way, he learnt a great deal about the work of the foundry.

During this period, he made one of the mistakes of his career, which had to be remedied later. He found that the English spoken at the pit-head was generally ungrammatical and that his more correct grammar was attracting undue attention. David, like many young people, was very sensitive, and so he adopted the common phrasing brought to Gorlan by English immigrants. Instead of "Were you there?" he would say "Was you there?" and feel more at home in consequence.

It was easily picked up, but not so easily got rid of. Fortunately, David loved reading and in that way did not sever his connection with good English completely.

Even the "penny dreadfuls" of those days were written in fair English, until the conversational portions introduced the idioms and words of the "Wild West."

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These thrillers passed around the boys in the shop and their make-up was reminiscent of the tales of Baron Munchausen!

One thriller depicted the arrival on a ranch in Mexico of a sickly and small-sized Britisher who wore "the old school tie." He had to leave the country of fogs to regain his health in the more bracing air of Mexico.

The ranch was owned by a fair young lady, whose Spanish antecedents were hazily traced to the ancient grandes of Spain. She had a large-sized foreman, well-skilled in all the science of ranching, who was the terror of all around him. His great ambition in life was to acquire the young lady—and the ranch. The tenderfoot quickly fell foul of him and in the presence of the fair owner of the ranch received a fearful licking.

But the air of Mexico worked wonders on the Britisher's health and his determination to be revenged was reinforced when he fell in love with the fair owner.

Yes, "wonders" is the right word. By the end of a year or so, he could handle his long-thonged whip with that dexterity that flicks off a fly from the back of a steer several yards away. He could handle his lariat with unerring facility. His struggle to ride the wickedest bucking broncho on the ranch was something to

remember ; he shouted for a large corked bottle full of ale, and as the broncho came down after rearing wildly, the bottle crashed down on his skull ; the effect was instantaneous and the one-time tenderfoot had won as his friend the swiftest footed horse of the wide open spaces of Mexico ! But his challenge to the bully in the presence of the young lady was his crowning feat. They started the fight with whips, but the defeated bully called for a "rough-and-tumble." Here again the Britisher had learnt every known trick of both continents. He was able to jump into the air and kick out the teeth of the bully and eventually vanquished him.

With such an exhibition of prowess, what could the young lady do but accept the hero's hand, to the great jubilation of the whole ranch !

At the great wedding feast, a cablegram was received which revealed that the bridegroom was the younger son of an earl. His father and elder brothers had all perished in a yachting disaster while on their customary pleasure cruise, and the earldom and vast estates were his. So the estates in both hemispheres were merged together and the couple "lived happily ever after."

The heroes of those stories had every known virtue and the villains every known and unknown evil. Whatever evils befell the heroes their great virtues won through in the end, and the villains received their retribution.

The boy readers lived in this thrilling world of fiction and if they read weekly serials, they simply existed from one week to the other to know how the heroes fared. Those serial story writers knew what they were about. The story might finish off one week with the mounted hero, chased by a swarm of Red Indians or "bad-men" whites, coming suddenly to the edge of a precipice. The madly galloping mustang leapt to his death hundreds of feet below. Then would come the agonising words, "To be continued."

In a heart-yearning anxiety as to the fate of the hero, the boys would be waiting the arrival of the weekly parcel at the newspaper shop. They would then find that the hero, with great presence of mind, had thrown himself free of his falling steed and had jumped on to a tree which was growing conveniently about ten feet below the edge of the cliff. Here he may have been badly shaken, but alive, and hiding in the foliage as the pursuers turned away from his certain death.

Unreal ? What did it matter ; the boys had their weekly thrills and enjoyed them immensely.

One serial-writer at that time fell ill and his editor happened to be away on a long holiday at the same time. The former gave his brother the back numbers of a serial he was writing and asked him to keep it going while he went to the South of France to recover his health.

The brother read through the back numbers and came to the conclusion that the villain was not getting a fair deal ! What the astonished editor read on his return was several published numbers

of his paper, in which the hero had become a thoroughly bad lot and the villain had become fully qualified to wear the wings of an angel !

The real pleasures of reading such stories come only during the short period of youth, and David enjoyed that period immensely. He may have acquired some incorrect ideas of life on the practical side, but his romantic nature was satisfied from week to week and he learnt that codes of honour must be kept by would-be heroes.

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A new boy came into the foundry who was as big as David. The old foreman, however, would not part with David, who therefore stayed where he was but received an increase in pay as if he had been moved up and his basic rate became 2s. 2d. per day.

David was becoming a proficient striker. It was not enough to strike the tool held by the smith ; it had to be hit by the centre of the face of the sledge ; that face had to be in a true horizontal position when the blow was made, especially when hammering out the hot iron or steel. To mark the metal with the outer edge of the face of the sledge was frowned on by the smiths. David soon learnt to swing his sledge, and, with the added momentum of bringing his sledge around and above his head, his blows were more effective. His arms and wrists became strong with this work, but his young legs grew weary.

After being with the old foreman for about eight months, David had the double promotion to which he was entitled and went to work with the tool sharpener. This meant a basic rate of 2s. 4d. per day, and as the time-keeper did not give him the increase he asked Mr. Benjamin for it and had it on the following pay day.

The miners finished at 2 p.m. on Mondays and at 2.30 p.m. two trams containing the blunt mandrels of the two bottom pits came to the foundry for sharpening. The smiths, however, worked until 5.30 p.m., the hours above ground being longer than those in the pit. So between 2.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. all those mandrels had to be sharpened and returned to their respective trams.

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, these two trams would arrive at 5.30 p.m. and the smith and striker worked until 7.0 p.m. in order to have them sharpened. For this extra $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours work they were given a quarter-turn extra. With this extra time, David's pay came to about £2 10s. od. a fortnight. One week-end, they both worked over Sunday to help the weighing specialists to test and adjust the weighbridges of the trams and trucks, and the next pay-day found David carrying three golden sovereigns home to his mother.

The work of warming the ends of the patent picks and mandrels was light but called for much care or the steel points would "burn" and at the first blow break off. It was the tram-repair work in between the sharpening periods that was heavy.

Nemiah and Derfel came along with their blades for sharpening and in that way the contacts became oftener again. The miners, or their "butties," waited for these blades to be sharpened and took them home with them.

The mandrils of the night shift would be thrown against the foundry doors and these were sharpened after the morning bank had passed.

Each of these mandrils had its owner's colliery number stamped on it and in that way were duly sorted out by the miners.

These numbers were used generally, and miners would mark up timber props, etc., which they required. One miner, whose acquisitiveness became notorious, would mark up anything he fancied with the chalk instructions "Send this to 1344." So often was this instruction seen that it became a great joke. Consequently, the miners and the boys would mark up the most ridiculous objects with "Send this to 1344." So far did this joke spread, that articles such as pier seats at Weston-super-Mare, the other side of the Bristol Channel, would be found with the injunctions that they were to be sent to 1344!

So a whole year in the foundry passed happily for David, and he was earning good money and learning all the time. The sharpening of pick-blades and mandrils called for quick skill and the points had to be "tempered" to the right degree of hardness. If too soft, the point would bend; if too hard, it would break off. David came to do this work, and one evening when his mate was ill and no replacement being available, he had the assistance of another boy and took the smith's place. It was a bit audacious, for he was only fifteen years of age, but he could do the work all right.

His mate, however, although an excellent man to work with, was displeased when he heard of it. He was afraid that it would be thrown up to him that a boy could do his job. So David learnt a bit more about the defensive code of the working classes and did not let it recur.

The sharpening work was quite repetitive, but the tram-repairing offered much variety. Each tram was a problem in itself. Here David had to strike off rivets and had to strike horizontally as well as vertically. He also learnt to hold the dolly for putting in new rivets and to do the riveting. He loved to hammer, alternately with another, to bring the new rivets to flattish cones as the boiler-makers did. He soon learnt to hammer quickly and accurately. He had what the smiths called "a good eye." The old foreman had an adage that "the eye of the smith was better than the yardstick of the tailor." This was very true, and the smiths could judge small dimensions very accurately. When it came to long distances, however, their judgment was no better than that of other people.

Meanwhile, the other life of Gorlan was going on, and men and women of other races came to glean the odd coins of those fortnightly pays.

The Italian organ-grinder, with his wife and monkey, was a frequent visitor, and one day David saw what was, to him, a phenomenon of musical entertainment. A swarthy man was playing a concertina. On his back was a drum and attached to his elbows were two sticks for beating it. On his head was a helmet of bells which jangled as he shook his head ; on top of the drum was a pair of clashing cymbals which operated by means of a leather thong attached to the man's heel ; truly a "one-man band"—concertina, drum, bells and cymbals !

Gypsies came around selling clothes-pegs and peddled other items. They would offer to tell fortunes, and with varying prophecies would generally please their hearers. This they did after selling something and not for a special fee. They would also use a barrel-organ and instal love-birds (budgerigars) in cages on top of the barrel-organ. When given a penny, they would bring out a bird and it was trained to pick "a fortune" on a small slip of printed paper out of a small drawer underneath the cage.

Jews came around with flat and covered baskets strapped from their shoulders. These were opened up and all sorts of small wares, particularly for sewing, were revealed. Some of them sold only caps at prices ranging from threepence to sixpence each.

Some Jews carried racks containing glass on their backs, and repaired the broken panes of Gorlan. Other Jews were chiefly in evidence on pay Saturdays, when they sold framed pictures and small articles of furniture. Gorlan people lost treasured photographs during one period when they were prevailed upon to have them enlarged and paid deposits. Both photographs and deposits were lost, for the callers never came again.

But the hawkers who were really welcomed were the French onion men (*Shoni winwns*). They would drag their hand-cart into Gorlan and then with shoulder-sticks heavily laden with strings of onions would go around the houses. They were regarded as brothers of the Welsh for they came from Brittany in France. Some could speak Welsh and their ability to "chaffer" was only equalled by that of the Gorlan housewives.

Naomi Bowen had a very simple rule of economics. She bought by the pound rather than by the "string of onions." Her standard for onions was the same as for new potatoes, peas, beans, cooking apples, and the like, namely a penny a pound. She might go to twopence or threepence a pound for plums or cherries, but the price for onions was a penny a pound. So the onions were duly weighed and the price of a shilling for the rope being countered by "ten pounds for tenpence." How those Frenchmen liked to chaffer ! Ultimately, after fearful protestations, the string would be sold for tenpence and another string pressed on Naomi at the same price. The honour of chaffering

being duly satisfied, she would go to the pantry, cut off a good slice of bread and butter, add a piece of cheese to it, and give it to the hard-working Frenchman. This was received with much appreciation and it was a token of sympathy of one poor worker to another.

Although smoked bloaters, red herrings and haddock were sold in Gorlan, fresh fish was bought generally from hawkers who brought their flat little drays, drawn by ponies, up the valley. Their calls would be "Fresh mackerel, three and four a shilling, mackerel!" or "Fresh herring, four for threepence!" They also sold much hake at threepence a pound. Cockles would be sold by the quart.

One man would come around occasionally selling butter-milk at a penny a quart, although fresh milk cost fourpence a quart. Naomi Bowen was a good customer for butter-milk and bought a quart of fresh milk daily.

On pay Saturdays packmen were inevitably on the Gorlan streets. The joke against them was that they would sell anything for a "shilling down and a shilling a week for life!" Naomi Bowen would have nothing to do with them, and when one had, with too much intimacy, thrust himself into her kitchen and roused her ire, she cleared him out by telling him to go—at the same time seizing a long poker! He fled.

The rag-and-bone man with his pony and cart did a good business in Gorlan, but not with Naomi Bowen. She cut up old garments to make new ones, and all surplus to that was kept for her quilt-making operations. Even old shirts, made of best Welsh flannel, were sandwiched between the patterned cotton remnants which formed the outer coverings.

In passing, it can be noted that the price of the quartern (4 lbs.) loaf of bread was fourpence half-penny during the period of our story. In fifty years, great changes have taken place in the prices of commodities and the methods in which they are retailed, and perhaps therefore, these examples are of interest and worthy of record.

CHAPTER XXII

GORLAN'S SPECTACULAR ENTERTAINMENTS

DERFEL came into the foundry in great excitement one Friday evening. He went up to David who was warming pick blades for sharpening and said :

" David, there's a big show being put up on the tip field. I was there last night and they're going to open up some of its parts to-night. But what do you think ? There's a boxing booth there which is to be opened to-morrow afternoon and a Spanish champion wrestler is to be there as well. The boxers and the wrestler are going to take on all comers."

David was interested despite his divided attention. Handing a pick blade to the smith and replacing it with another in the fire he said :

" We must see that wrestler anyway. Who'll take him on, I wonder ? "

" That's just why I came in tonight, David ; I talked to an ostler in our pit who's a bit of a wrestler. But he says that Michael Jones, the smith, is a better man than he is. They had a few bouts one day in the chaff-room here on top of the pit and he says that Michael beat him through sheer strength. Will you have a word with Michael ? "

" Well," said David, " I can't leave this fire and Michael will be gone before we are free of these blades. Why not go and see him yourself ? He's at the fire in the top corner."

Away went Derfel to see Michael. The eyes of the latter brightened as Derfel told him his story. But he said with a jocular smile :

" A Spanish champion, eh ! And you want Michael Jones to have his back broken by him ! You boys like to scuffle amongst yourselves, and nothing suits you better than to see others scuffling. Go along with you ; Michael Jones isn't such a fool as to do what you boys would like."

Now in the country districts of Wales a bit of wrestling was popular amongst the young men. When Michael was serving his time at a country forge, he and the young carpenter-wheelwright had many bouts on the grass near the shop. The latter had studied the articles on wrestling which had appeared in serial form in a boys' weekly paper, and Michael was not unfamiliar with some of the holds and throws of wrestling. He thought this over as he walked home to his lodgings—but a Spanish champion ! No fear ! He would, however, go to see others going through the mill.

Michael was strong. In his work with the trams, he had to use an enormous sledge in order to batter the buckled iron plates back into shape. Some smiths, for instance, rarely used a sledge, but tram repairers had to. He was almost burly and this size of his had made it difficult for him to get in and out of the man-holes in the boiler when he worked with the boiler-makers. At that time he had to discard all he had in his pockets in order to "make the passage," as he termed it.

Ostlers worked to feed the horses and clean them and look after them, so it was late when his ostler wrestling-partner called on him. Michael was prevailed upon to look at the matter from a Gorlan point of view. The ostler had called at the show grounds on his way home. He caught sight of the Spanish champion, and was not unduly impressed. After all, why should a Welshman of Carmarthenshire be afraid to tackle a foreigner?

The result was that they both decided to go to see the show on the following afternoon, and although Michael would decide after seeing the champion, they would discourage any suggestion that he might take on the professional wrestler.

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There was great hurry and scurry in Gorlan on the following day, and the collier boys had unwashed black rims to their eyes because of their hurry to get to the show grounds.

David and Derfel landed there about 3.15 p.m. and found that the boxing booth would not open for about half-an-hour. So they had a good look round. It was the biggest show that ever appeared on the tip field; and the first time that a boxing booth had appeared. There was also the first appearance of a variety show which they would sample later. The remainder was the usual collection that made a show.

There were the usual roundabouts with their little wooden horses rising and falling to the rhythm of blaring music which its machinery set going. An innovation had developed with these, for an occasional camel, ostrich and elephant appeared amongst the horses. Little carriages were provided for the smallest children.

There were coconut shies, Aunt Sallies, rifle range, swings, stalls with prizes for throwing rings and the like, and a mallet and bell-ringing apparatus. Derfel pressed David to try this latter feat, but although he was by this time a skilled striker with a steel sledge, he could not ring the bell with that awkwardly balanced mallet.

They watched various attempts at knocking off coconuts, etc. but kept their money for the shows.

The ringing voice of the proprietor denoted that the boxing booth was about to open. He ranged up his boxers outside the booth. He found them to be three in number and looked wildly around for his fourth. At last the truant was seen in gay

nonchalance on the back of one of the whirling, rising and falling horses on the roundabout ! The boxing booth had to wait until the grinning truant appeared after finishing his ride.

These boxing booths were popular in those days. They travelled the mining valleys of South Wales, challenging all comers, and picking up likely men in consequence. Names like Jim Driscoll, Johnny Basham, Tom Thomas, Percy Jones, Llew Edwards, Freddie Welsh and Jimmy Wilde came out of that period. Later, Tommy Farr, who came within an ace of winning the world heavyweight championship when he lost gamely to Joe Louis in 1937, was also a product of the travelling boxing booth.

Freddie Welsh won the world lightweight championship in 1914, while the Great Britain championships were won by Welshmen as follows : Flyweight, 1916, Jimmy Wilde ; Feather-weight, 1910, Jim Driscoll ; Lightweight, 1909 and 1912, Freddie Welsh ; Light Heavyweight, 1932, Jack Petersen ; Heavyweight, 1932, Jack Petersen ; Heavyweight, 1937, Tommy Farr.

Fighting with gloves came into vogue in 1882.

These records indicate the kind of physical fibre and the courage of South Wilians from among whom these champions came.

It was four young men of this type that faced the crowd at Gorlan on that Saturday afternoon. Beside them was the more spectacular Spanish wrestler, garbed in a leopard skin.

The proprietor held up boxing gloves and gave the usual challenge. When this was accepted, he threw a pair of gloves to the contender in the crowd, and soon all four couples were fixed up.

Meanwhile, Michael and his ostler friend were sizing up the professional wrestler. He was of medium height and his flexed muscles drew much admiration. His face was dark and he wore a rather foreign-looking moustache. He held himself with an air of superiority as though he disliked being put on show like this.

The proprietor pointed to him and said that he was a great heavy weight lifter. At that time the great Sandow was touring the provinces and giving exhibitions of this kind. As Sandow could not come to a small village like Gorlan, the village was glad of some form of substitute.

Then the proprietor gave a challenge to all comers. If anyone could throw the champion, or not be thrown by him within two minutes, he would be paid the sum of five shillings. The Spaniard's face fell into some scorn as he heard this sum mentioned.

There was silence for some little time until the ostler took up the challenge on behalf of his friend.

Then the curtain over the entrance was lifted, and the proprietor's wife and the Spaniard's wife were busy taking the threepences as payment for entrance. Those carrying the gloves, and Michael and the ostler were let in free.

David and Derfel, now tingling with excitement, got in early

with the surging crowd and made for the boxing ring which stood in the centre of the marquee. All spectators had to stand.

First, the Spaniard did some heavy weight lifting, raising an enormous dumb-bell above his head, and his muscles standing out on his body in consequence. It was quite genuine and the Spaniard was in good condition.

Then followed the boxing bouts in the best of good humour. The challengers gave their opponents but little hard hitting, but showed their obvious superiority. Later, at Rhydypant, the boys saw in another boxing booth that the challengers made a point of giving their amateur opponents bloody noses, but there was no blood spilt in this boxing booth at Gorlan. One challenger, a half-breed with dark, laughing eyes, was very quick with ducking his head. The blows aimed at it always went into empty air, while the challenger's glove found its mark on his opponents. Later, David noticed that no one would take on this challenger for his defence was so good that the miners could not get past it at all.

The proprietor acted as referee, and after three rounds apiece for the boxing couples, he announced the wrestling match would take place. The Spaniard and Michael went up into the ring. The former took off his leopard skin and stood in a pair of knicks and light, white shoes.

Michael took off his coat and waistcoat, then laboriously took off his muffler and turned up the sleeves of his Welsh flannel shirt. His ostler friend took charge of the divested garments, but Michael was still wearing a lot of clothes. Besides his shirt, he was in trousers and under-pants held up by both belt and braces. He also wore grey worsted stockings and a pair of boots, which, although light as compared with working boots, were heavy when seen beside the Spaniard's very light shoes.

The proprietor gave out the terms again—five shillings if Michael could throw the Spaniard within two minutes or not be thrown in that time. He then gave the signal to commence and David noticed that the ostler got quite close to the ring.

The two opponents came away from the ropes and eyed each other with caution. One had strength, professional training, agility and a quick eye. The other had but little training, but greater size and weight, much strength and a native shrewdness.

The Spaniard worked around on his lithe legs and Michael kept turning to face him. With a quick bound the Spaniard threw himself at his somewhat taller opponent. They closed, swaying back and fro as the excited crowd watched them breathlessly. Shouts were going up, but these were silenced by the ostler, who held up his hand and called for silence. Then he began prompting Michael in Welsh, giving his brains to help Michael's brawn. The proprietor did not object. After all, his man was professional and this rather loutish blacksmith was an amateur, and possibly tired after a week of hard work.

The Spaniard, by some hold, got Michael to his knees, but with sheer strength, Michael got to his feet. Again, they swayed back and fro and the two minutes were ticking by. When the ostler saw the pair in a certain position, he gave Michael a sharp word of advice. Michael shifted the position of one of his feet and with a mighty throw the champion was brought with his back to the boards with Michael on top of him. But the professional clung to Michael who, feeling himself the winner, relaxed his hold. The Spaniard with a quick strong effort, coupled with his skilled agility, reversed their positions and brought Michael's shoulders flat on the floor.

Then he sprang up breathless but in a rage that distorted his features and, pointing to the ostler, spat out in broken English—"You! — You! — You! — Next!" The proprietor, putting his timing watch back in his pocket shouted to him "Here, steady on!" adding under his breath "That's the worst of these quick-tempered foreigners."

Michael got on his feet with a grin. His hair was all tousled, his face was red and the perspiration was streaming over his face. His clothes were somewhat disarrayed, and his shirt, which had been gripped by the Spaniard, was partly out of his trousers. One of his braces was also hanging limply at his side.

The crowd got angry to see the Spaniard's attitude and they started shouting at him to be a sport. The proprietor held up his hand and called for silence. He said :

"Your man threw mine, but he didn't get his shoulders flat on the floor." Here he was interrupted by someone shouting "That's the first we've heard of that rule here." The ostler added, "We don't count on that in our country wrestling."

The proprietor held up his hand for silence. He had the reputation of being a good sportsman, but this was his first appearance in Gorlan.

"Will you let me finish," he said. "I know that getting the shoulders flat on the floor isn't recognised in some country districts, but that's the rule my man's working to." Murmurs of dissatisfaction came from the crowd. He went on : "Now, I'm the referee and I want to be quite fair to both men. I don't want to side with either of them." He was interrupted again :

"How can you be a fair referee when it means five shillings to you?"

This stung the proprietor, but he kept his temper. "I do wish that you'd let me finish what I have to say. Now let's look at the terms of the challenge. They were that your man was either to throw the champion or not be thrown by him within two minutes. Well, now then, according to your country rules the champion *was* thrown within two minutes, but according to acknowledged rules of wrestling, the champion hadn't been put with his shoulders flat on the ground. But then, I was watching the time, and the champion got your man flat on his back only

after the two minutes had passed." (Murmurs of appreciation at this fair rendering of the position). "So I declare that the Gorlan man has beaten the champion in a fair tussle." (Cheers) "Not only that, but I do object to the speaker's reference to my mind being influenced by the matter of five shillings. Why, d— it all! I've much pleasure in handing your man half-a-sovereign!"

This he did while the crowd cheered him and called him a real good sport. They then left the marquee, so that a new lot of challenges might be issued and another "house" allowed to get in. But the Spaniard refused to go outside on show again that evening, and his wrestling activities were confined to one bout an evening during the following week.

The ostler did give the champion a bout during the following week. David was not there, but he was told that the Spaniard had to appeal against some grip the ostler put on him in the bout, and the Spaniard subsequently won.

§

After tea, the two boys returned to the field, and made straight for the variety show. They had to wait until a "house" was ushered forth, and then, with the payment of threepence each, they were allowed into this other marquee.

Songs with some instrumental music started the show. These were followed by acrobatic performances by a family of six, the final scene being the strongly-built father supporting the whole of his family—in a very literal sense.

Then a screen was lowered and a picture from the old *magic lantern* put on and a soloist sang a song to suit the slides. The latter were changed from time to time to suit the changing phases of the song. The first slide depicted a man with a little boy in a field and they were gazing up at a skylark. The first verse went something like this :

"Skylark, skylark, winging your flight so high !
Skylark, skylark, when you get up in the sky ;
If among the angels mother you can see,
Ask her if she will come down again
To poor dear daddy and me."

This suited the sentiment of Gorlan and it was warmly applauded.

Then followed a juggler who was able to throw balls about and catch them while he balanced a vertical sword on his forehead. This was followed by a brief and humorous sketch in which four persons took part. Other enjoyable items followed and the entire show must have lasted about one hour.

Naomi Bowen was prevailed upon to go to this show during the following week. She had never experienced anything so enjoyable in the way of entertainment in the whole of her life before, and wanted to stay in to see it all over again !

The two boys stayed on to watch events in the show grounds. When girls began to squirt water over them from "ladies' teasers" Derfel got quite active in retaliation, while the more reluctant and shy David could only follow him around. These "teasers" were metal tubes similar to toothpaste tubes and on taking off the caps and squeezing the bodies, water would squirt out. They were sold at one of the show stands.

They debated for some time about going on the roundabouts. After all, they were not school kids now, but individuals earning their own livngs! Seeing grown-ups going on them, they decided to indulge in one of their school-period pleasures. They were soon astride their respective steeds and enjoyed themselves as they did in the days of yore!

The steam engine driving the roundabouts also drove a dynamo which supplied the electric light for most parts of the show. Paraffin flare lamps, however, were still used in the other parts.

After some hours of really good enjoyment, they went home in a very happy mood.

§

Shortly after departure of the show, the menagerie arrived on the tip field and Gorlan was getting more than its usual share of entertainment.

By this time the cycling craze had gone into the limbo of forgotten things and even the cricket had almost gone to nothing. But the rising interest was football, and it was association football this time. New goal-posts had been erected and fixtures made with other clubs. The team won some distinction, and in a tournament in the Daran valley they won medals which were duly exhibited in the shop of the jeweller and watch repairer.

The brief passing of the menagerie did not interfere with the football and all the villagers went to see the collection of wild animals which visited Gorlan for the first time.

Circuses had paid visits in the past and the delighted children saw those beautiful white, coloured and piebald horses that were so attractive. David remembered one turn which he saw on the field when he was very small. A little pony named Joey was put to go around the circus ring and jump over an obstruction. When the funny-faced clown called out "*Jump, Joey,*" the little pony would jump, but when the ring-master with his long whip gave a similar command he would not do so. This turn delighted the children immensely and "*Jump, Joey*" was the well-known saying in Gorlan for long afterwards.

Then a circus staged Dick Turpin's ride to York on Black Bess, with a fine black mare doing all that was expected of her. With her driver in the picturesque garb of the period, she would jump over an improvised toll-gate and later lie down as dead while the rider went into a long peroration at her apparent extinction. It was not this peroration that the children remembered, but the

oft-repeated instruction of the "mayor" to his son—"Ring the bell, Sammy!" This again got into the vocabulary of Gorlan.

How the children loved the colour, movement and the scenes of a circus! The garments of the performers shone with small bright flat metal sequins, woven into the fabrics. The novelty of the shapes of the garments appealed as well. The long tight-fitting hose and vest with the short loose knickers in between, were picturesque, apart from giving freedom to those lithe and shapely limbs.

With breathless awe the children watched the performers on "The flying trapeze," or vaulting on to those superb and bare-back horses, jumping through hoops, turning somersaults and doing many other feats which often called for perfect movement accompanied by perfect timing.

How those children of bygone days would go into shrieks of laughter at the jokes and funny antics of the clowns! With the passing of the travelling circus, the children's world certainly faced a great loss. Those children of Gorlan had all this entertainment in an afternoon performance for the payment of a penny each. Even the adults in the evening performance could obtain admittance for threepence each. There was even romance in seeing the marquee being put up, and being pulled down again for the next move. And the children would visit the vacated site and trace the position of the ring in the sawdust left upon the ground.

Happy days! Happy days!

§

David and Derfel got to the menagerie and passed the ugly looking camel near the entrance. The cages were formed around in the shape of an ellipse and clean sawdust was to be seen at the bottoms of the cages. They made the round to see elephants, zebras, giraffes, lions, tigers, leopards, pumas, many sorts of monkeys, parrots, macaws and the various types of other animals which go to form a good menagerie.

A boy from the same street as Derfel came up to him and asked if Derfel had seen his brother. He was promptly directed to the cage of monkeys!

A guide then appeared, clad in the menagerie uniform and the visitors were taken from cage to cage and the animals were described to them.

After that the trainers, also in uniform, entered the cages and put lions, tigers, leopards and pumas through performances, which, although accompanied by some snarling, were by no means exciting.

The two trainers differed completely in their treatment of the animals. One was continually using his whip—not heavily but his light cuts were rather often. The other, although he carried a whip did not use it at all; if a beast snarled at him he would

just smile and take a step forward in the direction of the menacing animal. There was great praise for the latter in Gorlan after the menagerie had left.

When the performances were over, David took Derfel to a cage in a corner. It contained a large lion, much darker than the others, and the lion's name was "Wallace." Neither of the trainers had gone into this cage, which was rather significant. David said:

"Do you remember seeing this lion before?"

Derfel stared at the fine-looking creature, and suddenly he remembered.

"I wonder," he said, "if it's the one we saw in that show in Rhyd-y-pant fair three years ago. It's very like him anyway. Gosh, this performance here to-day was a very tame affair compared to what this old lion gave us then."

David nodded. They had been given a half-holiday to go to the fair and went into the show which was made up of "living pictures" and a turn with a lion. The charge to go in was twopence and for the first time the boys saw the "living pictures." The film depicted a Spanish bull-fight, with all the excitement that the boys could wish. The charging bull made for its quaintly garbed tormentors, the matadors, who threw their cloaks over its head and darted out of its way. Then came the toreador who made the kill.

Afterwards the screen was rolled up revealing a large dark brown lion named "Wallace." (Possibly this is a favourite name for lions!) The whisper went around that this lion had killed two trainers and that he was very savage. From what the boys saw, these statements could be quite true.

The trainer got up on a little platform which was level with the cage. The lion came as near him as the bars would allow and snarled in a most ominous manner.

There was a kind of barred porch inside the cage, which made two gates between the lion and the audience. After telling the audience what he was going to do, he entered the very small outer cage, armed with a whip and a revolver.

This enraged the lion and he got against the inner gate and barred the way. The uniformed trainer then gave his assistants instructions and long, really red-hot irons were thrust at the lion which made him retreat from the inner gate.

Then, as quick as lightning, the trainer entered the cage. With his whip and a cracking of his revolver (with blank cartridges) he drove the enraged lion around the cage three times. As the lion passed the trainer, a wicked paw was thrust out to bring him down. This the trainer eluded and the boys' hearts almost stood still as they realised the trainer's fearful danger. The din of the cracking whip and the revolver shots were mixed with the loud vicious snarls of the lion. It was a pandemonium of movement and noise. As the lion passed the gate the third time, the trainer, again with lightning speed, opened the gate and reached the porch.

The justly incensed beast tried hard to reach him, but the bars safely separated the two.

The trainer then left the outer cage, bowed calmly and said that the entertainment was over. Many times in a day was this performance repeated and rumour said that the lion eventually killed that trainer as well. David and Derfel were scared at the thought of this experience for a long time afterwards. Never in their lives did they see anything of the kind to compare with it.

They now gazed their fill at the noble animal in the cage before them. He was lying there so quiet and took no notice of them. The guide was passing near them, and they ventured to ask him the history of the lion. He did not know.

The boys then related their experience in the Rhyd-y-pant Fair, to which the guide listened with some amusement, apparently enjoying their excited recitals.

"Well," he said, "as Wallace appears to be a friend of yours, perhaps you'd like to go in and pay your respects to him."

"Yes," replied the witty Derfel, "I always like to shake the hand of an old friend!"

The guide smiled at this ready retort and as he turned away, he said grimly :

" You wouldn't have the chance to shake the hand of any other old friend after you had shaken that of Wallace!"

David saw Wallace a few times afterwards, but he never saw a trainer of the menagerie entering its cage.

CHAPTER XXIII

JOB MORGAN SETTLES ACCOUNTS

DURING August some of the people of Gorlan went to gather bilberries, although, to them, these small luscious blue-black berries were known as "whinberries." The low shrubs on which they grew were only about six inches high and covered some acres of the mountain-tops in large patches. Of an evening David would see the gatherers passing the house with "tommy tins" and other receptacles in order to gather this fruit. It was regarded as a great delicacy in the large tarts that Gorlan housewives baked in their ovens. The best gathering ground lay on the west side of the valley, opposite the slag tip.

A party of small children decided, one afternoon, to go "whinberrying" and after getting baskets, which their parents knew they would never fill, they set out. They climbed the steep slope of the mountain and reached the plateau formation of it and were soon hunting amongst the little bushes. Unfortunately for them, others had been there and cleaned the bushes thoroughly.

However, the blue-black stains around their mouths indicated some small measure of success, and some time after four o'clock, they turned for home. They went racing back for it was now a down-hill journey, with the result that the party straggled out to a long tail. With the heedlessness of children, they did not realise that one little boy was a long way behind all the others, and the party went over the brow and out of his sight.

He was not missed at home until after five o'clock; then the people of the street in which he lived and which adjoined the mountain, went to look for him. They did not anticipate undue trouble in finding him for the children's rendezvous was not much more than a mile away, but the news quickly passed around the village as the colliers made their way homewards.

Job Morgan had washed his hands of their grime and was half-way through his meal when one of the sons said casually that a little boy was lost on the mountain. Old Job looked up sharply, conscious of the possibility of danger to that little child. He asked who the child was and where he lived.

"He's the only son of Dan Richards, the fireman, and he lives in Robert Street," was the reply.

Job's knife and fork clattered on to his plate as he asked :

"Is it Dan Richards that married Nancy Lewis, the manager's daughter?"

He was answered in the affirmative.

Job got up and looked for his cap, while his wife sensing his purpose rushed to the door and then came back quickly.

"It's beginning to rain," she said, "You can't go out in this, Job ; you've already got a bad cold on your chest."

"Of course, I go," was the stubborn rejoinder, "if it's rainin' the little boy will catch his death of cold. The sooner I go the better. We don't want this little chap to be another little Willie Llewellyn. *He* was found dead after days of huntin' for him on the mountain. That was only a few years ago. The sooner we look for this little chap the better. It'll be dark in a few hours' time."

He made for the door and one of the boys ran after him with a light mackintosh. Then he made for Robert Street and found a great increase of anxiety, for the little boy was still not found. It was now after six o'clock and a steady drizzle of rain was coming down.

Job joined another little party of unwashed colliers who were going to look for the boy.

They came on to the mountain top and found many others gathered in a conclave near the bilberry patch. Dan Richards was there and he was too distracted to be coherent ; but another fireman kept his head and gave orders. He strung out the searchers at six yard intervals, instructed them to keep contact and sent them westwards over the mountain top and way from the valley. He sent similar batches northwards and southwards. He told them to look out for the clefts in the mountain-top and if they had not discovered the lad, to make a return journey in an hour's time. That would bring them back before dusk. In returning they would come around on the flanks and scour the land in the angles between that of the three parties. Job Morgan nodded approvingly. That was the way to do it.

He, Dan Richards and Job Morgan would traverse the brow and be at call. If they failed, then they would get their lamps from the colliery lamp room and keep up the search all night. The fate of Willie Llewellyn was impressed on them all. He sent Job northward along the brow, while he and the boy's father went southward and yet kept in a visible position for signalling success when it came. It was still raining.

Job walked steadily onwards and scanned his beat with great care. The little boy would be tired by now and would be lying down, possibly asleep. He came above the top pit and felt his endeavours to be fruitless. Then he sat down on a wet stone in the rain and began to think what the little boy would do. One thing stuck in his mind. The lad would be travelling in the direction of the other children. That would be homewards. Then Dan Richards and the leader would find him. Not likely, either, for that part of the mountain had been partially traversed

already. The lad must be in some hollow, or, Good God ! he may have fallen down one of the quarries. There were five quarries on that side of the valley. He was now right above the uppermost which belonged to the top pit.

He got up quickly and made for the quarry and scanned the ledges and the bottom carefully. No, the boy was not there. He knew that the rain would bring on the darkness all the sooner. He must hurry his old legs along. In a perspiration he arrived at the next quarry which was worked for the bottom and middle pits. No luck. On he hurried to the abandoned quarry that used to serve the same pits. No luck again and he was getting tired.

He now looked into the valley and saw the feeder pond of the collieries just below him. A boy ten years old had been drowned there about five years previously. Another boy had thrown the victim's cap into the pond. Unwilling to go home without it the victim had stripped and gone in to retrieve it. But the pond was deep and he could not swim, so he was drowned in the sight of his scared tormentor.

Job Morgan shuddered at that possibility, but turned for the next quarry. This too was abandoned and the fencing above it was in a rotten condition. After that there was only one quarry, that which Mr. James the builder was working. Job dragged his weary limbs along the mountain slope and came to the abandoned quarry. His searching eyes scanned the bottom of the quarry and his heart leapt as he saw at the further end the inanimate form of the little lad. His anxiety was tempered with some satisfaction as he noted that the boy had not dropped over the high sheer face of the centre of the quarry. He had evidently tumbled along the shoulder of the quarry and was out of sight to any searchers from above.

The tiredness left Job Morgan's limbs and he ran to the prostrate body. Was he alive or dead ? Job knelt down and saw that he was still breathing, but unconscious. Then he felt the lad's limbs and found that one leg was broken, while blood oozed slowly from a wound in his head.

Job took off the mackintosh and wrapped it about the wet form of the boy. It was still raining. As he picked up the boy, Job's heart sang within him. This was the manager's only grandson, and he, Job Morgan, had found him. He said a prayer, " O God, I'm a rotten old devil, but spare this little boy's life, Amen."

Job felt it would not be a prayer without that " Amen."

It was now getting dusk and as he turned to leave the quarry with the precious burden in his arms he saw below him the dancing lights of carried safety lamps. So someone had already organised the search in the darkness. Job's heart warmed within him. Good old Gorlan, what a great people they were ; at least, those other than an old reprobate like himself.

Carefully but hurriedly he went down the steep mountainside. At the bottom he met a man carrying one of those lamps and told him to take the message to the top of the mountain that the lad was found. He refused to part with his burden to the next man he met, but told him to fetch Dr. Edwards to the lad's home at once.

With a coterie of rejoicing but anxious Gorlanites behind him and still refusing the often proffered assistance, Job Morgan reached the lad's house and gave him to his overwrought mother. Then the strength he had called up into his old limbs ebbed away and he fell unconscious on the kitchen floor.

Kind hands lifted him to a sofa and someone ran for brandy. When it was procured it was suggested that the brandy should be mixed with water, but the unanimous verdict of those who knew Job Morgan was that it was only in its neat form that brandy would have any effect on him !

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The following morning found Job Morgan back home in bed, clean and comfortable, but suffering from pneumonia. His wife was fussing around and doing all she could for him. Then Dr. Edwards came and Job's anxious inquiry was,

“ How is the little boy, doctor ? Is he all right ? ”

“ Thanks to you, Job Morgan, the little lad is doing fine. I put his broken leg in splints and bandaged his head. It was a near thing, Job. Had he been out all night he would have been dead by the morning. Now I must try to get you all right too, but you must stay in bed for two or three weeks. No Gorlan Hotel via the rainwater pipe this time, mind ! ”

Job grinned ; he had too much pain to laugh outright as he wished to do.

“ Well, doctor,” said Job with a naughty wink, “ if I can’t go to the Gorlan, the Gorlan must come to me ! ”

“ In moderation only, you old rascal,” was the rejoinder. “ We don’t want to lose Job Morgan just yet. By the way, the boy’s parents want to come to thank you, Job, but I said you wouldn’t be fit to see them. Mr. Lewis, the manager, wants to see you too, but I told him that you were not fit for scripture quotations as yet ; nor for your lamp ticket either.”

A smile of great pleasure came over the now wan face of Job Morgan as Dr. Edwards told him of the manager. He said :

“ Don’t be hard on old Job Morgan, doctor ; many’s the time I’ve gone to see him : Now do let him come along to see me for once.”

“ All right, in a few days’ time then, if you make enough improvement,” was the response.

So with Job's improvement, Mr. Lewis arrived at his house. He told Mrs. Morgan and the boys what he felt about the debt he and his family owed to Job. Yet in his consideration he asked : "But is he fit for me to go talking to him ?"

Mrs. Morgan smiled and answered :

"Job was ever a talker and liked his bit of tongue, as you probably know, Mr. Lewis. Well, that's how he is now, he wants company and the doctor says that he can't get too much, within reason. You go right up to him, Mr. Lewis, he's in the front big bedroom."

So Mr. Lewis went upstairs, and noted the *smallness* of the *largest* bedroom. Its walls were painted in salmon pink colour and the ceiling was white. The room was bare for it only contained the double bed, a chair and a chest of drawers. Two tradesmen's picture almanacs hung on the walls.

He found Job Morgan right glad to see him and in a cheerful mood. After first greetings, Mr. Lewis went on to thank him for saving his grandson's life. Job waved his right hand airily and broke in upon him :

"Don't say a word about it, Mr. Lewis bach. If you do, you remind me of *my* debts and it's about time that old Job Morgan paid some of them. Look at all the scripture and lamp tickets you've given me in my time. Someone told me that I got Sunday School and a collier's work together. No offence, Mr. Lewis bach, you've been a good friend to me since you've been here. Let's see now, didn't you come here just after the 'splosion of '85 ?"

"Yes, Job Morgan," was the manager's reply and seeing a chance to change the subject, "you were in that explosion weren't you ? How did it come about ?"

Job Morgan became thoughtful as he brought to mind the disaster that deprived Gorlan of 81 lives.

"I was," he replied.

"What was the cause of it ?" asked the manager.

"No one will ever really know," was the rejoinder. "Some said that a collier must have been strikin' a match to light his pipe. That I don't believe, Mr. Lewis. I never saw anyone do that. As you know we hide our pipes in the little holes in the walls on top of the pit before going down ; and we get them when we come up again. No, it might have been shot-firin', an electric spark or even a hob-nailed boot making a spark in the tram-rails. I don't know. Nobody knows."

"How did you manage to get away safely, Job ?"

"Well, Mr. Lewis, I was on the way out when I heard the noise of that 'splosion. I knew what it was. Keepin' my head down, I ran to a stable and threw myself full length into one of the horses' mangers. I kept my mouth tight on the chaff in the manger.

The 'splosion shook that stable, and there I was like a ' bug in a rug ; ' safe in the shelter of that manger."

The manager knew that Job had been one of the first to be rescued ; after coming to the surface, Job saw the waiting women with drawn and anxious faces, and wanted to go down again to help his mates. The heroism at these pit disasters was remarkable. When he was about to join a party to enter the cage, his wife dashed out from the crowd and simply tore him away from the rest. Job said nothing of this and the manager's face softened as he looked at the happy-go-lucky Job.

The latter had become thoughtful. Then he said :

" Not so many 'splosions takin' place now, Mr. Lewis. You've done good work in these pits since you came. You've worked the galleries so that the air works around them ; you've put in them doors, and even big sheet iron pipes which carry the air into bad places. But for that I expect that most of us would be in ' kingdom come ' by now."

The manager changed the subject again.

" What about that affair when you and about two dozen other men were entombed for two and a half days and nearly drowned ? "

" Oh, that ! " was the answer : " well, we don't see that now, either. The pit pumps are much better these last twenty years.

" Let me see now. That was when a large fall took place which shut us right in ; it closed up the water channel by the side of the tramroad as well. So there we were like rats in a trap. We couldn't get out and the water was risin'. After a bit we could hear men workin' at the other end of the fall. We had the gas gainin' on us too. To keep out of the gas, the lower we were the better ; but as the water rose in the gallery we had to keep high to be out of it. Our lamps went out after some time."

The manager nodded for Job to continue :

" So before we lost our strength and before our lamps went out, we cut a shelf on our end of the fall. That wasn't a good place either, for it might start more of the fall. But we had to keep out of the risin' water. We could hear the party workin' night and day to save us ; after some time the gas got an escape through the fall. So we put our gassed mates up on the shelf and crawled up beside them. Then we noticed the water goin' down a bit. That meant that there was less distance between us and the party. The water was escapin' through the fall. We had eaten our food before the fall happened, but we had some cold tea left ; we made that last a day. At any rate I went off to sleep on the shelf."

" Yes," continued the manager, " and you were nearly all in an unconscious condition when you were rescued ; but you all survived, like the five men who were entombed in the Tynewydd Colliery, Porth in 1877. They were without rescue for ten days."

Job nodded.

" You got over it all right Job ? " asked the manager.

" Oh, yes," was the rejoinder, " but it gave me an awful thirst. I never got over that," he added with a grin.

The manager smiled. Here was an old veteran of the coal-field ; a hero really. He was an enemy largely to no-one but himself ; and his solace was drink. His wife had had a difficult time because of it. And yet, the father's example had been a warning to the boys and they were never seen inside a public house. With the boys being so good and considerate to their mother the family had not suffered a great loss because of Job. Until the boys came to earn he had spent very little on drink. The manager looked at the old reprobate with interest and kindness. He got up to leave and said :

" Well, I've kept you talking too much, Job Morgan. Thank you once again for what you've done. Is there anything you want me to do for you ? "

" Yes, Mr. Lewis, bach " said Job as he shook the manager's proffered hand ; " come and see me again. I've enjoyed this talk very much." Then he whispered something to the manager. The latter nodded an affirmative.

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It was thought that Job was recovering during the following week and then he had a relapse. Dr. Edwards shook his head sadly and told the anxious wife and children to prepare for the worst. Job knew that the end was near and he asked for the manager to come to see him.

Mr. Lewis entered the bedroom with a very heavy heart, but tried to look cheerful. Job's query was about the grandson who was now making the rapid progress of youth.

Job said weakly : " Mr. Lewis, I know my number's up. Oh, yes it is," as the manager shook his head in disagreement. " I want you to read me a bit out of the Old Book, Mr. Lewis. I learnt a lot of scripture from you and it has done me a lot of good. It helped me to remember the good things. I go over them here in bed as I am passin' over to settle the last account with my Maker. He can't be too bad on me. I always think of Him as being like you, Mr. Lewis. I've got a notion that he will give me my lamp ticket all right. Will you read me that bit about laying up treasure in Heaven ? "

The tears could not be kept back altogether from the manager's eyes. He could not trust himself to speak. He knew that passage by heart, but he reached for the Welsh Bible and found the passage. Keeping the book in the light from the window and his eyes in the shadow, he put on his spectacles and pulled himself together. He blew his nose and read :

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal : but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Mr. Lewis then offered up an extempore prayer and in the silent pause he made before saying the "Amen," he thanked God for men like Job Morgan. Then he took the weak hand of Job and departed quietly into the darkening street for he did not want the family to see what he felt.

Job rallied a little the following day and a flash of his old humour came back as he told his cobbler son to mind to wear his top hat at the funeral. But the following morning found that Job had gone to his last account. And as the debits and credits were weighed against each other for Job Morgan, the balance sheet must have shown a substantial credit in his favour. At any rate who are we to judge otherwise ?

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A day or two after the funeral, an insurance agent called on Mrs. Morgan and asked her to sign a paper so that someone else could draw insurance money. This procedure was customary to some extent in those days. Naomi Bowen had been approached once and solicited for the insurance of old Cradoc Bowen's life. This she indignantly refused. She had no great regard for her father-in-law, but to profit by his death in this way was repugnant to her. Insurance societies were referred to in Gorlan as "death clubs."

Mrs. Morgan asked the agent who had insured her husband, but the agent hedged and would not say. So as Mrs. Morgan would not sign until she knew he went away. Then later, he came along and offered her five pounds if she signed. Again she refused. Then he came back the following day and another insurance agent with him ; they now offered ten pounds. Mrs. Morgan did not like their shifty expressions and again she refused. During the following day, the eldest son met Mr. Lewis and told him about the affair. The manager told him that Mrs. Morgan was not to sign and that he would see the insurance agent.

That night he called on the agent and without showing that he knew about the refused signature said :

"Mr. Jenkins, I've come here to pay the few premiums owing on Job Morgan's policy and to arrange for Mrs. Morgan to draw the money due from that policy."

The insurance agent jumped and blurted out :

"Show me the policy you're talking about, Mr. Lewis."

"I can't" was the rejoinder, "for on his deathbed Job Morgan told me that you had it. He didn't want his wife to know that he was doing her this good turn, so he asked you to keep it for him."

The insurance agent was baffled for a moment and then he said :
“ The policy has lapsed because Job hasn’t paid the three premiums due.”

“ He couldn’t, could he, when he was ill in bed,” was the rejoinder, “ and you took care not to call for those premiums.”

The insurance agent looked sullen and obdurate, so the manager went on—“ But *you* paid those premiums, Mr. Jenkins, so that the policy should *not* lapse. You only wanted Mrs. Morgan’s signature and then you could draw Mrs. Morgan’s hundred pounds and tell her nothing about it.”

A grim, dangerous look came into his eyes and the insurance agent capitulated.

And that is how Job Morgan, with the help of the manager, placed a hundred pounds in the hands of his widow. It was another credit balance in Job Morgan’s favour.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE FOUNDRY WORK HOLDS ITS INTEREST

DAVID'S second Christmas at the foundry found him as striker with the deputy-foreman with a basic rate of 2/6d. a day. He was only fifteen years of age and really too young for this heavy work ; while his growth seemed to have stopped. The sledge he swung was 13 lbs. weight, and, although his arms stood up to the work very well, his legs ached. To ease them he would sit down and keep one eye on the foundry windows to see if Mr. Benjamin was on his way in, and another eye on the iron in the fire. This drew some caustic comment from the old foreman at the next fire, but David's aching legs made him deaf to these hints about sitting.

Such was the disciplinary standard of those days. While an employee was paid for working, then he must stand unless the nature of his employment called upon him to sit. In the outfitter's and with Tomkins, sitting down, even when doing nothing, was not permitted. It took another generation to produce wisdom, but still with great reluctance. The Shops Act of 1912 made essential the provision of seats for *female* assistants serving in shops, and stipulated *not less than one to every three employed in each room*. It was no wonder that there was so much suffering with varicose veins in the legs, which David in his young wisdom avoided. It was this senseless waste of human effort that set David thinking of economising in the strength given him in order to conserve it for greater efforts. This policy stood him in good stead all through his later career.

His extra work with the sharpener was until 7 p.m., but he now worked frequently until either 7 or 9 p.m. ; for the latter, he was paid an extra half-turn. It will be seen from this that evening study was impossible, but on Sundays he managed to read some of his brother's books of English literature. The craving for the thrills of the boys' papers had definitely waned by this time.

The deputy foreman, a man of medium height and wearing the customary moustache of those days, was very strong and a good man to work with. He had, however, a strong streak of mischief in him, and would put David to do some tricks on others. The old foreman, ignorant of the source of inspiration, would rebuke the boy with admonitions, which, although severe, were always just.

It was the job of a striker to stop the engine in the foundry when they closed down at normal times on Mondays. They would all be waiting for the hooter to blow and when that welcome sound was heard, the striker would run to the engine and shut it off to silence. That deputy-foreman could imitate the hooter very well,

and there would be great commotion to restart the engine again after his false imitative note !

As mentioned previously, each smith had his own particular allocation of duties, and to the deputy foreman was allocated the smithwork relative to the pit-shafts and the winding engines. A "pitman," a carpenter by trade, had the responsibility of seeing that the winding gear was in proper and safe order, and he carried out daily inspections for this purpose.

He came in one day and said to the deputy-foreman :

" Jim, I see that the keys of the sheaves of the middle pit are loosening. Can you attend to them after the afternoon "bank?" "

This meant overtime and Jim looked at his rather small-size striker and said : " We'll see what my mate and I can do to help you, Tom."

So at 5.30 p.m., the smith and striker were at the foot of the high steel structure over which the sheaves rotated and got ready to go up. It was rather cold, and unlike Tomkins' ladders of wood, the ladder here was of steel, steeper and cold to the grasp. They carried David's heavy sledge and key-driving tools.

Jim put the long handle of the sledge through David's coat collar until the cold metal rested on the nape of the boy's neck, and he secured the coat by buttoning it. Looking up the height of fifty feet, he asked, " David, my boy, do you think that you can climb up there safely ? "

The boy looked up and without realising fully the nature of the journey, said gamely, " Of course, Jim. I've climbed ladders with Tomkins before."

" All right, then," was the reply, " You go first and I'll come behind you. If you find it too much, let me know, and we'll come down again."

This would mean hunting for another striker. David, with the heavy cold metal on the nape of his neck, started the journey. He now realised that, with the sledge disposed of, both his hands were free.

Up and up he went along the sloping steel ladder, with his hands getting colder all the time. Then he paused. The sloping length had finished and in front of him was its termination in the form of a dead vertical length of eight feet.

Jim, close behind, called out encouragingly to him. He gritted his teeth and started again. The weight of the 13 lbs. sledge was drawing him away from the ladder and put more strain on his numbed hands in consequence. He dared not look down. He looked up, and exerting all his strength of will, grasped the rungs alternately, taking care that three of his four limbs were on the ladder at the same time. That is, when one foot was being lifted, the other foot and the two hands clung to the support. Similarly, when one hand was lifted, the other hand and the two feet were firmly attached.

To go up Tomkins' ladders two limbs were sufficient. Slowly

and desperately he gained the top, and by this time he was gasping for breath. He tottered to the handrail around the platform and rested himself. Jim had followed him, thrown down his tools and relieved him of that awful weight on the nape of his neck. He felt better then. Jim eyed him with concern, and said, "It'll be easier to go down, David."

While Jim was signalling the driver of the winding engine, David looked around him with interest. The sheaves, which looked about four feet diameter from below, were actually eleven feet in diameter. As they rotated, they went contrariwise to each other. Each sheaf was held in position by a round axle which was six-and-a-half inches in diameter, and they were secured together by keys. These were rectangular in section and fitted grooves made for them in both sheaf and axle. The ends of the axles rested on metal bearings secured to the platform and they had to be oiled periodically.

Jim got each sheaf in turn to have the key uppermost and signalled the engineman to keep the sheaf in that position. Then he put David to hold the key-driving tool, and with mighty swings of the sledge, drove the keys tight. As each blow landed, he let out his breath with a "Heh!" This was characteristic of him and the boys in the foundry would imitate him out of mischief. He did not permit the now recovered David to use the sledge at all.

When they had finished, Jim put the engineman to rotate the sheaves and stopped the gear again for him to see if the movement had loosened the keys in the process. But all was well, and the sledge disposed of as before, they made their descent safely.

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It was Jim's job to make new cages and to repair the old ones. After being in use for some time, the rivets of a cage would loosen, and it would be changed for one of the two which were always ready for replacement. These rivets were large and obstinate to cut, and Jim's "Hehs" were many as he took his turn with David in the striking necessary to cut them off. Then they would replace the rivets after straightening out any bent bars or plates, and Tom, the pitman, would replace the old woodwork with good new elm planks.

One day Tom came into the foundry with great excitement and told Jim that the coils of steel rope had slipped on the drum of the winding engine of the bottom pit. It was about 4 p.m. and if the rope and drum could not operate properly, the men could not be taken out of the pit at 5 p.m.

Jim and David, armed with steel bars and sledges, went there at once. They found the engine on stop and the bearded driver very excited.

The steel-rope was one and a quarter inch in diameter and coiled over the drum of the winding engine. The drum, or barrel, was eleven feet in diameter and the length, over which the

steel rope travelled, was eight feet. The rope was arranged on the drum so that two ends came away from it and these were secured to the two cages. As the drum revolved, the two ropes travelled in opposite directions. One was coiled in and raised a cage while the other uncoiled and lowered the other cage. The distance of the drum from the pit was twenty-eight yards, centre to centre. It was imperative, therefore, for the coiling and uncoiling of the steel rope to be operating perfectly, in order to raise the fifty trams per hour, each weighing 27 cwts. each, through the shaft which was 380 yards long. There was the safety of the men in the cages to be considered as well.

Jim and David found Tom's version to be correct. The former shook his head as he examined this mixture of the coils. He told David to stand clear of the drum for the one-legged old fitter had lost his leg in a case like this some years before. Then he took hold of a steel bar and pitted his strength against those strong coils of steel. Occasionally he put David to strike on the top of the bar in order for him to start the necessary leverage. Otherwise, David could only look on and watch breathlessly this struggle between the animate man and the inanimate steel. Both were strong, but the man had brain as well as brawn. He would put the engine-driver to revolve the drum, now this way and then that. The perspiration was streaming over his face in that hot, oily-smelling atmosphere. At last he won and the snaking coils were operating perfectly again. He sat down exhausted, and David looked around him. It was now 5 p.m. and the first cageful of men came to the surface.

There was another engine-driver there who looked after the electrical machinery, and, after praising Jim, asked David if he would like to look around. The latter readily assented, and he was first shown how the drum of the winding engine wound and unwound a small steel cable which operated a bell. When the engine driver heard this bell, he knew that the cages were within a certain distance of their destination and the engine would be slowed down accordingly. The engine-driver was able to look direct on to the pit-head as he operated his levers.

David saw some recesses in the walls around the winding engine and asked his guide what was their purpose. His guide replied :

"Well, the engineer who set out this pit-head made a fearful mistake. This engine-house isn't built on a true axial line with the pit. Now the centre of the big drum is opposite the centre of the pit, and the axis of the drum must be square with such a line. When they came to fix the winding engine in that way, it was found that the engine-room would not accommodate it because its axial line didn't correspond with that of the engine. So they had to cut out those recesses in the walls in order to fix the engine. The mistake broke the heart of the engineer and he died not long afterwards. So my boy, if you become an engineer, take care to set out your buildings and your engines properly. There's

always a right way and a wrong way, but the right way is always the better of the two."

David remembered Tomkins and his errors and asked : " Should I learn only the right way ? "

His guide looked at him with some surprise and answered,

" You must learn the right way ; but very often you can only know what's right by knowing what's wrong as well."

He was then shown how the electric dynamo worked and how the steam hooter was sounded. By this time Jim had recovered and they made their way back to the foundry.

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One Sunday Jim and David and others changed a rope of that same winding engine. The old rope was taken off on to a turnstile tram and the new rope put on, also from a turnstile tram. The metal attachment which terminated the rope above the cage was called a " cap," and Jim and David had the task of putting this on. A ring was hammered about the rope a foot away from the end, and the wires bent back over the ring. This was bound with stout tarred string, and the end then formed a long conish shape with the metal cap was hammered, re-inforced with iron rings and then riveted. Four chains came up from each corner of the cage, which merged together into one chain. To this a short length of strong chain the cap was duly fastened. The lives of men depended on the security of this tackle.

The shaft was 16 feet in diameter and the deck of each cage was 7 feet long and 4 feet 6 inches wide, and accommodated a tram, a horse or ten men. The walls of the shaft ranged from 9 inches to 27 inches thick.

Strung from the top gear to the bottom of the pit were the eight stationary guide ropes, four to each cage. The cages had to slide along these ropes and brass castings on the cages came in contact with them.

One day Tom the pitman came in to say that one of the fastenings of the pipes in the bottom pit shaft had worked loose. Between the banks Jim and David were lowered into the pit, on top of the cage. They were amongst the four suspending chains and were lowered very slowly to find the loose attachment. The water simply poured on them from above and they should have been in oilskins like the pitman. The elm planking forming the top of the cage was therefore wet and slippery. David hung on to one of the chains.

They reached the desired spot. Jim had to place a key-driving tool on the loose fastening and put David to strike it with a light sledge. The fastening was about two feet away from the edge of the cage, and David was short-limbed. He managed to hit the tool twice, but the third time his foot slipped on the wet surface. He saved a fall to the bottom of the pit only by a timely grab on a chain. Jim leaned out and hit the fastening with his long

handled hammer. He then signalled for their return, and reported to Tom that the fastening was now more secure.

They had to go down the bottom pit at times to do some rope splicing and to put "caps" on the ends of steel wire hauling ropes which were three-quarters of an inch in diameter. Jim was an expert at rope-splicing and, when he had finished, it would take the careful examination of an expert to find the splice.

Jim, the senior shoer, the peg-legged fitter and the roadman of the middle pit, formed a team of four for entering splicing competitions at the shows. They had won the first prize at the Royal Agricultural Show held in Cardiff in 1901. It was a pleasure to watch them in these competitions where "time and workmanship" were considered.

There was speed, but no excitement. Every blow was in its place. To start, a pair would work on each end of the rope to be spliced. Both ends had to be prepared and then brought together with the cut strands in their proper positions.

Then they would pair off again in order to weave in the strands at each side of the centre of the splice. The leader of each pair had to stoop by bending his legs at the knees at times; the one-legged fitter would then balance himself on one foot and shoot out his peg-leg into a horizontal position. In fifteen minutes the four champions would finish their splice.

While David was still at the foundry, the annual horseshow at Rhyd-y-pant was held. The four old stagers had not competed there for years, but as cups and medals were being introduced for capping and splicing of ropes they went all out. They brought back to Gorlan almost all the prizes.

CHAPTER XXV

DAVID COMPLETES HIS CAREER IN THE FOUNDRY

JIM had to attend to the underground hauling engines of the two pits. Nearly all the engine drivers had spent time striking in the foundry, moving to engines as promotions from Jim's fire. They generally worked day and night shifts, a pair of engine-drivers changing the shifts over in alternate weeks. They frequently called at the foundry, and the sons of the foreman were employed in this way. Should they want some replacement of fitting which they could see to themselves, they would call at the foundry for it and there would be no more said about it. But if assistance was required, then the foundry had to send help and that would mean a bit more overtime for Jim and his striker. In this way David got familiar with the underground engine-houses and their occupants.

The engines were of varying grades of importance and with varying rates of pay accordingly. Promotion meant shifting from one engine to the other, and the final promotion was to a winding engine on top of the pit with an eight hours shift.

Jim was a great Co-operative stores man, and was on the committee of the Rhyd-y-pant stores. How he found time to attend their meetings is still a mystery. The Co-op. (pronounced "cop") played a big part in Gorlan, which divided itself into "Co-op." and "Anti Co-op." When the assistants of the Rhyd-y-pant Co-op. went on strike for more wages, Jim had his leg pulled unmercifully by the Anti Co-ops. in the foundry. This partisanship extended strongly to the engine-rooms underground.

One afternoon an engine driver named Caradog came into the foundry, and told Jim that he and the other drivers were getting trouble with the clutch of the engine. He was of the opinion that the leverage system working the clutch was at fault. Would Jim come down after the to-morrow's bank to see to it? He would arrange to stay on and for the other engine driver, Wilson, to go down with Jim and his mate. Clutches were heavy pieces of casting and it would be as well to get ready to strip the clutch and have a good look at it.

These engine drivers had long lonely waits for signals for the hauling of "journeys" of trams and to relieve their loneliness, they took books with them. These they read with the aid of the electric lamps which lit the engine-rooms. Caradog and Wilson had embarked on reading books on social progress and as both were very argumentative, they were nick-named "*doctoriaid*" (doctors of learning). Caradog was of a very studious type and gave his reading much care and thought.

Jim consulted the old fitter with the peg-leg and was given a probable diagnosis of the trouble. So the following evening saw Jim, David and Wilson arriving at the engine-room with a spare part of leverage and some tools.

They all set to work and found the old fitter's diagnosis to be correct. They changed the worn part of the leverage. The clutch itself appeared to be all right. The work was done by a quarter past six, but both drivers, still anxious about the clutch, wanted the engine tried with a full load of trams. This could not take place until 7.30 p.m., so they had some time on their hands. Jim told David quietly as he wiped his greasy hands with cotton waste : "We'll get some fun with these *doctoriaid*. You watch how I shall set them going."

Wilson was a violent Anti Co-op. man, so Jim asked him, "Have you joined the Co-op. yet, Wilson ?"

Wilson was quite willing to start an argument and he looked at Jim with scorn.

"No blinking fear," he said. "I don't believe in these Co-ops. like you and Caradog. If everybody was like you two, no tradesman could hope to have a decent living in Gorlan. What business have you, a blacksmith, to go poking your nose into grocery, butchering, and selling clothes?"

Jim gave David a wink as much as to say "I told you I'd set him off." He answered :

"Well, we paid a dividend of four-and-sixpence in the pound last quarter, so our noses are in the right direction anyway."

Wilson snorted : "And how do you do it? First of all you charge the top market prices. Things in the Co-op. are higher in price than in any other shop. Then look at the trouble for the women ; they've to go down to Rhyd-y-pant and wait and wait in the shops before they're served. Your old shops are understaffed and the assistants are underpaid. Look at the strike you've had there recently ; and what did you do as a committee ?" Here he raised his voice in high indignation and answered his own question : "Advertised for new assistants—yes, and those blacklegs are there now—most of them, and you've turned most of the others away. Do you call that fair play ? I would rather be seen dead than belong to any Co-operative stores."

"But four-and-sixpence in the pound given back to the members," rejoined Jim. "For every pound's worth they bought, they had four-and-sixpence back. That profit would go into the pockets of the tradesmen otherwise."

Wilson retorted : "I've shown you that it's not all that, and tradesmen have to live on their profits, that's their income. To earn it they put in long hours of service and invest their capital. Yes, and they've to lose money in bad debts and strikes as well. But you Co-ops. take care that *you* don't lose money in that way. Oh, no ! You make every member pay down £5 to join your rotten old Co-op. So that money is more or less payment in advance.

Then if a member hasn't paid up his accounts at the end of the quarter he loses his precious dividend. You've got him all ways. He pays more for his goods to make that dividend and then you make him afraid of losing what he has already paid you in too much money." Wilson snorted again with indignation and Jim to irritate him kept murmuring "Four-and-sixpence in the pound."

Wilson turned on him again and said :

" Why don't you build shops here in Gorlan and save your poor women-folk wasting time going to Rhyd-y-pant and standing in the shops waiting to be served ? You wouldn't stick that from the tradesmen who've provided shops, yes, and proper assistants to deal with customers quickly. It's a pleasure to see these shop assistants in Gorlan ; all in the grocery trade in clean white jackets and aprons and the butchers in clean striped blue aprons as well. I do hate to see food handled by persons in dirty clothes and with dirty hands and faces as well."

Jim did not try to counter his arguments, but with that inane repetition of the same thing which is so irritating in argument he kept repeating wickedly :

" But four-and-sixpence in the pound ! "

Caradog had been watching this discussion with enjoyment. Now that it had come to a stop, he said to Wilson : " Tell Jim that story about the Co-op. horse."

To this Wilson was by no means loath. He turned to Jim again : " You call the Co-op. '*siop ni*' (our shop) don't you ? Well, I was on night shift a fortnight ago, and I went down the road. There I saw one of your Co-op. drivers beating his horse to drive the poor beast up the hill.

" A woman was cleaning her upstairs windows—you know how ; she had lifted the bottom sash of the window and sat on the outside sill cleaning the top sash. She saw the driver beating the horse so she called out to him.

' Hey ! what do you mean by beating *our* horse like that ? '

" The driver looked up at her with a surly frown. He then went from the horse's head to its tail, caught hold of a hair, and yanked it out viciously. Then he went towards the woman and held it up to her and said, ' Ere you are, missus, you had better come and fetch it, and do as you like with it. That's all of this blinking horse that belongs to *you* ! ' "

They all enjoyed this story, particularly Jim.

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We now come to the kind of discussion which often took place amongst the more serious-minded of the employees of the coal industry in the Welsh valleys.

Caradog wanted to keep the discussion going. He had come as a lad to Gorlan from Newtown in Mid-Wales and was very proud of the traditions and associations of his native town. He said to

Wilson : " Well, it was Robert Owen who started this co-operative business."

" Oh, no ! it wasn't !" said Jim, " Bob Owen isn't even a member with us,"

Both the drivers looked at him quizzically ; his innocent face was a bit too innocent. Caradog asked : " What Bob Owen are you talking about ? "

" Why, Bob Owen, the chimney sweep who lives in Mountain Street, of course—who else ? You know—the man who goes through the streets shouting " Pop Sweep," and he cleans the chimneys at one-and-sixpence a time."

Wilson and Caradog looked at each other with pained disgust, while Jim gave David a knowing look. Now he knew very well that their Robert Owen was not his, but did want to know about this man " who had started the co-operative business." Bits of knowledge like this were very useful at the Co-op. committee meetings.

Wilson said to Caradog, " You had better enlighten him ; I read that book on Robert Owen which you lent me, but you've the subject at heart better than I have."

" All right then," was the reply " and this young Welshman " (pointing to David) ought to know something about our fellow countryman, Robert Owen. He was born in my native place—Newtown, Montgomeryshire, in 1771, and died there an old man of eighty-seven, in 1858.

" His father was a tradesman, being a saddler, ironmonger and sub-deputy postmaster. Robert was given the limited schooling available at Newtown and came to the end of that limit when he was seven years of age ; so he was made an usher, or a pupil-teacher, as we would call him to-day. He was very fond of reading and the several private libraries of the town, including those of the clergyman, physician and lawyer, were thrown open to him. When he was nine he went to work in a small general store, selling drapery, haberdashery and groceries. He knew every man, woman and child personally in the little town through his work as an usher and shop assistant."

David thought that he, too, knew of everyone in Gorlan through working in shops and with Tomkins. Gorlan was a much bigger place than Newtown.

Wilson said : " So that his background was that of a small Welsh town not far from England. What struck me as remarkable was that after being inculcated in the Methodist religion, he read of other religions of the world, and at the immature age of thirteen he decided that there was something fundamentally wrong in all religions. He was, consequently, not a Christian."

" No, but that background clung to him, and if any one lived the life of the Good Samaritan on a grand scale, it was Robert Owen. I see that this boy is listening attentively, so I'll go on.

" At ten years of age he left Newtown for London to seek his

career. All he had in his pocket was forty shillings, and his coach-hire was paid. He went to his eldest brother who was in business in London. He left there to work in succession at Stamford (Lincolnshire), London and Manchester as a drapery shop assistant. He worked hard but seems to have met good employers, each with a strong religious bent.

"When only eighteen years of age he borrowed £100 from his brother and started business in Manchester as a manufacturer. New textile machinery was then coming into use. A year or so later he gave this up in order to become the manager of one of the largest spinning mills in Manchester. In this way he gave up the experience of being the boss of a small business to become the manager of a large business with five hundred employees, at twenty years of age. For the first six weeks in his new job, he 'laid low' as it were and absorbed all the knowledge he could from the business and thought out theories of management."

David was listening intently to this; he thought that it was a good thing to know all the facts first. This was a lot wiser than Tomkins' ignorance and bluster, and it played a part in his later career.

Caradog continued. "Then he got going on real management. He reorganised the mill, and in doing so he did something which was novel in those days—*he improved the conditions of the workers*. It was here that he formed his theories as to the effect of environment. The output of the mill also improved in many ways, and after six months' service the mill owner (Mr. Drinkwater), who had been somewhat scared at the £200 a year which Owen wanted as salary, promised him £400 for the second year, £500 for the third year, and in addition, a fourth share of the business in the fourth year.

"At twenty-four years of age he left Mr. Drinkwater and joined up with others to form a new firm. This was still in Manchester. Meanwhile, Owen had inspected an industrial community at Marple built by a manufacturer named Oldknow, who had combined agriculture and quarrying with his cotton industry and built a village for his workers. This man was regarded as a model employer of his time, and Owen, with the betterment of the workers in mind, must have been impressed with what he saw."

David wondered how that village compared with Gorlan and if the houses were better or worse than those which he and Tomkins repaired. Wilson intervened: "What about Robert Owen's own village of New Lanark on the banks of the Clyde in Scotland?"

"Well, I'd better jump to that. Owen's business took him to Glasgow and when he saw the mills and village of New Lanark, owned by David Dale, a very good employer in his way, he saw his opportunity. His firm bought out Dale's interest and later he married Dale's daughter. He was now about twenty-eight years of age, and he set out to reorganise the mills and improve the habits and morals of the workers. His partners left the

management to him. By this time he had the average experience of a man of forty.

"Children, as soon as they could talk almost, had to go to the mills to work about thirteen hours a day and suffered much from bad conditions and harsh overseers. Their growth became stunted, their limbs maimed, they lost their health, and even their morals. Owen changed all this in New Lanark. He wouldn't let the children work until they were ten years of age and even favoured as a minimum age twelve years. Dale had provided schoolmasters to teach the children *after working hours*, but what could the poor little things learn in a dead tired condition. So, although Owen had lessened the number of hours of working in the day and provided some education for them at night, his great idea was to educate the children before they went to work at all.

"So we've to thank Robert Owen here in Gorlan that our children now do that as a matter of course," said Wilson. "No boy is allowed down the pit until he's twelve years of age."

"I suppose so," said Caradog; "but Robert Owen wasn't satisfied with just that; he had his own system of teaching children as well. He was far ahead of his time, and even ours, in the educational methods he employed. His first concern wasn't for teaching them reading, writing and arithmetic, but to form their characters on sound lines. He believed in the effect of environment on everybody, but he trained the children, and the grown-ups, to help in forming a good environment.

"He improved the village as well. The houses were enlarged, the streets made cleansable, while his inspectors kept the houses under supervision to see that the tenants didn't live in filth. In the factory as well a strict supervision was exerted, and gradually the inhabitants improved.

"The experiment was so much of a success that many went there, even from foreign parts, to see results that were wonderful in their day. Here was a man who was doing two things successfully at the same time, when it was thought that they were opposed to each other. He was making money and improving conditions for the workers. The Duke of Kent, father of Queen Victoria, was a warm supporter of Robert Owen and his methods."

"But," intervened Wilson, "his partners didn't share his views, and successive changes of partners didn't agree with him."

"No, Robert Owen was badly hampered in his schemes, and he had to compromise very often. The first lot of partners wanted the money Owen spent on schools and the like, in their own pockets as more profits—although their profits were already very high. The last lot were satisfied with a limited profit of 5% per annum, but were concerned with the religious welfare of the children in the schools. So ultimately, Robert Owen gave up the management of the place in which he had produced such wonderful results. Although most unpopular with his employees at first,

they eventually worshipped him. He had, after all, brought them a newer, a better and a fuller life."

"But what about this co-operative business?" asked Jim, "You haven't said a word about it yet."

Caradog smiled: "All right, old partner, let's come to the co-operative business. Robert Owen set up stores under his own control in New Lanark which sold goods at 25% less than other shops. Out of this business a profit of £700 a year was made, and this went to support the schools.

"With New Lanark working successfully, he began preaching a doctrine which he wanted applied to the whole country in order to alleviate the poverty, squalor and unemployment that existed. It was that if men lived in a better environment, better working conditions, better homes and better social conditions generally, then men would respond and reap the harvest of contented living. But as I stated before, he believed in training for this."

"That," interrupted Wilson, "is where he differed from the tenets of our Christian religion. We believe that the improvement of man must commence from within himself, whereas Owen, or "Owenism" as it was called, believed that the improvement must be from outside, namely, from environment."

"Yes, and in concentrating on that, Owenism probably failed. I believe that you must have both, and that with true Christian endeavour, good environment must follow."

"What about the Co-operative," asked Jim, "I notice that Robert Owen paid a dividend of five shillings in the pound and still had money to spare."

"But did he?" said Wilson. "He may have provided the buildings free and charged the cost of assistants against the mills. After all, although a capitalist, he was really no financier."

"No," answered Caradog; "prophets are not financiers, and Robert Owen was more of an idealist than a realist of his time. He could see in his imagination the completed structure of a contented working class people and his success at New Lanark fortified that prophecy with some realism. What he failed to see was that the stones of his structure and the labour of sufficient willing hands were not then available. Nor are they now. But he started men thinking on right lines; they took up the stones of his visualised structure and they began building smaller edifices somewhat independent in character. We now have Education for all children, Trade Unions, Factory Acts, Co-operative action and other things which he set going. They may not be exactly as Robert Owen thought of them—we have made them to suit our generation, not his.

"Take co-operation for instance. His plan was to form whole communities that would be self-supporting. Not finding enough support in this country, he went to America and spent most of his fortune in building up the community of New Harmony. Like other ventures of the kind in this country it was a failure. Yet out

of his fine, unselfish soul, he brought later successes to this world.

"The Co-operative Stores of Rhyd-y-pant owes its more definite origin to some Rochdale flannel weavers who formed a Trading Fund in 1844 under the title of the 'Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers.' Their aims were similar to those of Owen and the Co-operative Societies which existed from 1826 onwards. Let's have a look at what the book says." Here he dived into a box and brought out a book. After finding the page he read out : " 'Objects. Store for provisions, clothing, etc. Houses. Manufacture. Acquisition of land and its cultivation. Temperance Hotel. Home colony of united interests.' Their success endured because the Co-operative movement confined itself to the first item (as we do in the Rhyd-y-pant Co-op.) and possibly some manufacture of the goods they sold."

Wilson asked : "Why was Robert Owen regarded as a failure in his day, Caradog ?"

The reply came quietly : "Wasn't Christ a failure in *his* day, Wilson ? I have told you that Robert Owen was a prophet and not a financier. When young, he read studiously and extensively. He had a remarkable run of experiences, and he must have analysed the whys and wherefores of the results of those experiences. Then he seemed to have closed the doors of his mind and soul to outer influences and depended on his own resources and opinions. To my mind, that's when he became a prophet—he depended upon that inspirational light of his inner soul, lit by the torch of God" (here Caradog's eyes shone) "and the prophets follow that light rather than the reasoning of their fellow beings. Prophets see things as they wish them to be, and in all things, good."

"But why did he fail ?" persisted Wilson.

"When you consider the period he lived in, it's surprising that he made so much success at New Lanark !" was the reply. "You think of our experiences here at Gorlan. The men come up here from farms in the country, and for a long time they don't fit in with our partially communal life. They worked alone so much and their opinions and actions were individualistic. If they wanted to finish a furrow, sow a field, mow a meadow, they did it and pleased themselves. There was no hooter to force their labour into fixed periods of time, as becomes necessary when lots of men work together as we do in this pit.

"When they come here, they want to finish loading a tram as they finished their furrow in the country. As you well know, if they are hauliers here they want to wait to get a full journey of trams before letting the old engine here haul it in. Time and the intricate fitting in with the rest of the pit work do not come into their consideration. Eventually they learn it from us who have learnt to think of the men in the pit as a big team."

"Where does that fit in with Robert Owen ?" asked Wilson.

"In his career in the start of the Industrial Revolution," was the reply, "when most of the employees drifted in sheer necessity

from their agricultural fields to work in the factories and live in the villages and towns. They were individualistic in outlook and Robert Owen wanted them to be collective in outlook. He even tried with his village communities to cultivate land on this principle and failed completely. His communities broke up into sections and ultimately broke up altogether."

"Look at our trade unions in this valley ; it's only now that they are getting on their feet properly. The South Wales Miners' Federation was established only in 1898, although the district organisations existed before then. Later there'll be a National Union of Mineworkers for the whole country and in that way we move forward step by step to Robert Owen's collectivism.

"A trade union must depend on co-operative, or collective, effort, and our fathers, who came from the country, couldn't understand the need of such effort. We, who've been brought up in a community, know, as Robert Owen knew a hundred years ago, that we can't get our rights without the co-operative action of a trade union."

Caradog paused, and David asked : "Were the houses of New Lanark better than these in Gorlan ?"

"No, from what I've read they weren't as good, even after Robert Owen had improved them. But what we've to bear in mind is the value of his experimentalism, yes even in his failures.

"At present George Cadbury is building a model village near his cocoa and chocolate factory at Bournville, near Birmingham. William Lever of Lever Bros." (afterwards Lord Leverhulme) "is doing the same at Port Sunlight near Birkenhead. Both these men are capitalists, but, like Robert Owen, they've social reform linked up with their industries. Both are great men, and as the founders of these garden villages, they've furthered Robert Owen's conceptions, and probably profited by his mistakes. In that way Robert Owen's experiments and his mistakes have proved of great value.

"George Cadbury and William Lever saw the advantages of co-operative action, but with greater practicability they also saw its limitations."

By this time there was much movement outside the stone arched engine-room, and the entry of the night overman to enquire if the engine had been repaired put a stop to all further discussion. David had listened eagerly to what Caradog had said, and although he did not then realise the whole purport of Caradog's statements, they made an impression on him. This lasted and grew in after years, and David ever respected that grand old prophet of his day—Robert Owen.

When the time came, the engine was tried out. The row was terrific and David thought that the place might come down on top of them. But all was successful and the three went up through the pit, with another half-turn each to add to their pay-tickets.

David found his work with Jim very heavy for his smallish frame, and his legs still ached. With David becoming a very proficient striker, Jim decided to take on piecework. This consisted in making sets of tools for issue to the colliers by the storekeeper.

Each set comprised four mandrils, a steel sledge and a steel wedge. The mandrils were made of iron and pointed with steel, while the sledges and wedges were all of steel. They were made from plain bars.

The mandrils were of three sizes and made out of iron, about $1\frac{1}{4}$ " square. They were cut to lengths cold and then the centres of the lengths heated. Longish slits were then punched in them and from these slits the eyes of the mandrils were forged in order to take the wooden helvēs. This meant very heavy and very quick striking and Jim had to work very hard as well. The two of them would make four sets of eyes (16 mandrils) between 6.0 p.m. and 9.0 p.m. The following night, if free of other overtime, they would "steel" the points. For this, steel wedges had to be made, the ends of mandrils slit, the wedges inserted and then welded into long points with the help of the steam hammer.

The sledges and wedges were also made with the help of the steam hammer, which worked erratically and simply poured hot water on to its own anvil. This was very hard and difficult work for Jim, while the handle to which he clung with his left hand, nearly yanked David off his feet. The steam throttle was operated by David's right hand. What a steam hammer!

When a number of sets were completed, they were taken into store and Jim was paid for them. He gave David about half of what he received and when a comparison was made, it was not a lot more money than that paid for ordinary overtime.

The second shoer also turned out shafts and guns on this basis. It was all very hard work.

The rates for the foundry craftsmen ranged only from 3/5d. to 4/- a shift, which put the lower paid workers to be not much better than the labourers who received 3/- a day. With the percentage at about 50% this meant from 5/1½d. to 6/- per shift. Even with overtime, the lower-rated men found it hard to make both ends meet. They applied to the colliery agent for an increase, but were unsuccessful.

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This had a direct bearing on David's career. He was nearly sixteen years of age and it was time for him to make a definite choice of future employment. Naomi Bowen wanted him to stay in the foundry, but the long hours and low rates of pay discouraged him. The former prevented him from doing any study.

By this time he knew every process in the smith shop and could handle his tools very efficiently. The trade-test for a smith was to forge a smith's hammer and to have a perfect eye to take and

hold the wooden handle. This David did and that hammer was one of his most treasured possessions in after years. He classed it with the last report of his school days. Both were visible certificates of his proficiency and he was quietly proud of them.

Despite the heavy work and long hours, David was very happy in the foundry. The company was congenial and the work most interesting. He simply loved to forge hammers, chisels, punches and other tools out of plain bars. There was an element of creation and novelty about it which satisfied the hand and eye, the mind and the soul. The promotion to engine-driving underground did not appeal to him at all, and in any case, the pay was less than that of the smiths.

So, much against Naomi Bowen's will, David decided to leave colliery employment in order to learn his trade as a mason. There seemed to be a more adventurous prospect in building work, and all hope of becoming a doctor had long passed away. He was now a manual worker and accepted this as his fate—for a time anyway. Later in life, David regarded this step as one of the most decisive in his career and he never regretted it. Nor did he regret his two years' period in the foundry which gave him insight into so many things. He could have become a smith, fitter or engine-driver, and later an engineer like Mr. Benjamin, but his young mind told him that it was all too slow and that promotions often meant waiting for dead men's shoes. It was with regret that he parted with his many friends, but the happy memories of his period in the foundry ever remained with him.

CHAPTER XXVI

GORLAN'S BUILDING OPERATIONS

THE housing shortage was getting very acute in Gorlan, and it was decided to build another hundred houses, adding one more bar to the gridiron plan of the village.

Mr. Meredith, the accountant, called a meeting in one of the chapel vestries, and a building club was formed in order to further the enterprise. These buildings clubs were very popular and they provided much needed accommodation. Not only that, but they helped the colliers to become owner-occupiers, and to save money for their old age.

The principle was simple. Each club member paid £1 a lunar month as well as his 24/- rent. With sons working, this was not a difficult matter. Lots were drawn for the allocations. In seven years, under Mr. Meredith's capable financial management, the houses would be paid for. So that with paying £90 in subscriptions and a rent which would have to be paid anyway, the club member became possessed of a house worth £150.

Mr. Meredith was a very sound man, who called a spade a spade—and not "an implement of excavation," or a "blinking shovel" either!

To finance the erection of these houses, he would look up the pay records of the colliery and see who were earning good money, and who were likely to be saving it. Then he would pass word through to a miner and tell him to call at the office on his way home.

Knowing Mr. Meredith to be somewhat of a dictator, the man would be anxiously wondering what trouble was in store for him. The Accountant came to the point at once:

"Look here, John Jones, we want money for building these new houses. Now you get only $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ per annum for your money in the post office. I will give you 4% while we borrow it from you, and give you a note-of-hand for the money. Whenever you want it back, you can get it, but you must then return the note-of-hand."

The relieved John Jones would agree to these terms, subject to having a word with the missus.

In this way the money was borrowed only as it was wanted and repaid as soon as it was not required. There were no mortgage deeds or solicitor's fees, and no procuration fees either. The interest on money loaned on mortgages on houses at this time was 5% per annum. So the building club had several advantages from Mr. Meredith's able management and sound standing.

The colliery surveyor drew the plans and Mr. Benjamin supervised the erection of the houses. At the winding up of the club, the grateful members would give the accountant and the engineer the repayment of their subscriptions for one house each for their work. On the cost of the houses and as a total payment to both

this was about 1½%; or £1 per member to each of them, and everybody was satisfied.

When one club had been wound up, another was started. So a member of the first club would take two houses in the next, the argument being "If I could pay rent of 24/- and £1 a month, then I can now pay £2 a month for two houses because I pay rent no more." By this time the family would be in better circumstances as well.

The houses were all of the same plan and if any extra was required, then the club-member paid the contractor the lump sum required for it. As the families grew, there was a tendency to build a small wash-house for the colliers to bathe in. The result was somewhat incongruous, for to save keeping two fires going the large family would then push themselves into the small "back-kitchen" as it was called. Consequently the kitchen proper would fall into disuse. From this developed the desire to partition off the kitchen and call it the "middle room." So with the back-kitchen now acting as both kitchen and scullery and having its door directly on to the outside, the increased accommodation meant living under worse conditions.

Then developed a larger back-kitchen with a scullery in addition, but with narrow frontages it was impossible to secure a back-kitchen as large and convenient as the kitchen proper. The introduction of a bathroom would have solved a great deal of the difficulty, but this was a luxury undreamed-of for colliers in those days; besides, they liked to bathe themselves before a large fire. Pithead baths were not thought of in Gorlan.

The one-storied back-kitchen generally "smoked," which added greatly to the inconveniences noted, so many were built up another storey in order to stop this nuisance and provide a much-needed bedroom above. It was the arrangement of two storied back additions that deprived the backs of the houses of much air, light and direct sunshine, and gave them later the title of "tunnel-back houses."

From these there developed the semi-detached houses, and later the houses of the 1919-1939 period with better frontages and bathrooms.

David was to go through these periods of development and to learn a great deal about housing conditions. So his decision to re-enter the building industry was propitious.

Reverting to the houses built by the Gorlan building clubs, it can be pointed out that their maintenance cost was very low when the tenants were reasonably good. Even when the tenants were bad, there was not much to destroy. The worst tenants were in the Company houses and any undue damage they inflicted had to be paid for by them. This was done by the simple expedient of deducting the cost out of the tenant's fortnightly pay!

Mr. Meredith collected nearly all the rents of the village and in that way he exercised a rather despotic control. He was,

however, sternly just and a very hard worker. Later, his health broke down under the strain of all he did, and he was obliged to retire.

Doctor Edwards shared a similar fate and he and his one assistant had to be replaced immediately by four doctors.

During Doctor Edwards' suspension of activities, the medical fund came to a substantial credit balance, and Gorlan decided to build a large Workmen's Hall. This was to replace the old coffee-tavern and library on which David worked with Tomkins.

So the old building was pulled down. David had an early association with it for he used to go there on Saturday mornings and buy old newspapers for the butcher at a half-penny a pound. These were used for wrapping meat, but the numbers of *Punch* and the illustrated papers provided David with some education. He used to sit on the empty meat hamper in the corner of the shop between errands and regale himself with the pictures of this literature. Some of the political cartoons he saw in *Punch* were afterwards famous and later he saw reproductions of them.

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David started working as a labouring boy for Mr. James, the builder, as a necessary prelude to learning his trade as a mason. During the summer months the building employees worked fifty-six hours, and in winter forty-seven hours. These were subject to loss of time in case of rain, snow and frost. So at 4½d. per hour, he earned £1 1s. od. in the summer, if at full time.

He found a great change as compared with the work in the foundry. There was not so much fun, and to keep the working hours as much as possible, the men struggled to work on through drizzling rain and got wet in consequence. The loss through wet weather was reflected in the pay packets, and with the actual experience of it himself, David never lost sympathy for workmen and their wives who had to face this hardship.

Thomas Bowen had to face the same sort of thing, but he welcomed working in the open air again, this time as a mason at 9d. per hour under the foreman who had replaced him.

It was Naomi Bowen, with the balancing of the family budget, who felt this change mostly, and to add to her difficulties, her eldest son had entered the University College and had to be kept at Cardiff. The remaining children were all at school and had to be suitably clothed and fed. The strain of it all fell heavily upon her, but her unfailing courage rose to meet the circumstances once again.

Mr. James, the builder, not only had the contract for a hundred houses at Gorlan, but, much to his surprise, his tender for another hundred houses at Dolyderi was accepted. This meant that he wanted another general foreman for the Dolyderi contract. He asked Thomas Bowen to take the job on and he would pay him 10d. per hour and there would be no loss of time for him during

bad weather. As David's father was proficient at stone dressing of steps and sills as well as at walling, this was no financial strain to Mr. James ; but it did give Thomas Bowen an increase in status and wage, as well as a little sense of security.

The contract site was four-and-a-half miles away from his house and it meant walking there and back morning and night, and carrying food again as he did to the pit. He was now approaching the fifties and not feeling as strong as he used to. He accepted, provided that David should go with him and be put to learn his trade as a mason right away. David had worked only two months as a labourer and the usual term was six months. In fact, several boys had waited much longer than that period for an apprenticeship with the contractor at Gorlan.

To this Mr. James readily agreed, but David's wage would then fall to 3d. per hour. Thomas and Naomi Bowen had discussed this and found that the wages of both would be roundly the same. The added labour would be that of getting to the job, and there were no convenient trams or buses in those days. In any case they would cost money.

So at sixteen years of age, David found himself called at 4.40 a.m. to find both his parents already astir. They breakfasted and at 5.15 a.m. David and his father started their four-and-a-half mile walk to Dolyderi. Their food was cut the night before and put into tins which kept it fresh. Each carried a jack of cold tea as well. They put these into frails and hung them over their shoulders.

David was half asleep all the way to Dolyderi, where the punctual Thomas Bowen had to arrive several minutes before the starting time of 6.30 a.m. The few minutes respite were welcome.

Then followed hard work until 6 p.m., with a half-hour interval for breakfast and an hour for the mid-day meal. Tools were put away after the finishing time. For the shortest hours of winter they started at 7.30 a.m. and finished at 4.30 p.m. with only half-an-hour for the mid-day meal. Messrooms for employees were not thought of in those days and the meals were eaten cold and without a fire to warm at.

The first lot of houses were brought to foundation level. Then one mason or a mason and an improver were put into each house to commence at the same time. David was put with a very fine type of man, and they both set out to keep up with the other couples.

David's hands became hard and horny with the work and soon they began to crack. These cracks were covered over with shoe-maker's wax. In wet weather, the wet bricks and stones wore away the skin of his fingers until his father cut him a pair of hand-leathers out of the uppers of a strong pair of boots.

The work was kept up strongly and incessantly during the working hours. There were no breaks between for little jobs like heating irons, and David thought that his back must surely break in two as he straightened from a stooping position.

The gang was entirely new, and it was only those who could stand the pace who were kept on. Many gave up after a few days' work and sought less strenuous employment. Thomas Bowen kept a keen eye on all that went on, but he did no shouting or bullying. Just a tactful word now and again kept things going, and he was a good organiser. He did not hang over the men all day long, but went on dressing sills or steps between periods of arranging. Mr. James came on the job only about every other day, and then about half-an-hour before finishing time. It was the strong competitive spirit of the men that gave the job its tempo and was largely the means of producing these cottages at less than £150 each.

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It was now September, 1904, and David had been at his trade for a few weeks. He met Derfel on a Saturday afternoon at the new temperance club which had been opened in an empty shop at Gorlan. Regaling themselves like old hands over their soft drinks, Derfel said, "When I was getting up this morning, I caught sight of you and your father walking past. Aren't those white corduroy trousers you were wearing heavy? And why white anyway?"

"They were grey-brown when I had them," replied David, "but after washing them they became white. They *are* heavy, for I carry a steel two-foot rule and a spirit level in a special pocket as well, but the cloth has to be strong and tough for taking the wear of heavy stones. The old-time masons wore aprons like the blacksmiths do now, but they're an awful nuisance when you bend down to pick up a stone."

"Well," said Derfel, "I think that we made a mistake to leave school as we did. I know now that my mother was right, but I haven't owned up to her yet. She's still sore that I went to work in the pit and gets on to me about bettering myself."

"How can you do that?" was the curious question.

"I'll tell you, David, what's in my mind. The mine surveyor was without his chain-man recently, and he selected me to take his place while the old chap was away ill. The surveyor showed me how to read the measuring staff by looking through the dumpy level. Then he took a theodolite down the pit one day."

"What's that?" asked David.

"It's an instrument on a tripod, just like a dumpy level, but it's far more wonderful. The surveyor can take levels with it, but he can take angles of directions with it as well. He can take horizontal angles as he does in the headings underground, or he can take vertical angles in order to find the gradients of the headings."

"He's going to start a mine-surveying evening class here in the Gorlan schools next month, and several of the miners, including yours truly, are going to join it. He's going to teach us trigonometry to start with. It's a pity that we didn't stay on at the

Rhyd-y-pant Science School another couple of years ; we would have learnt mechanics and mathematics, including trigonometry then."

Now David did not share these vain regrets altogether. He had accepted the harsh decision that had driven him away from his beloved school and wasted no time on vain regrets. What Derfel told him was interesting, so he asked, "Do you think of becoming a mine surveyor ?"

Derfel paused before replying, took a drink, and threw out his legs with a sense of adult comfort. At last he said, "To tell you the truth, David, and I wouldn't tell anyone else, not even my parents, I'm absolutely sick of this stuffy pit work and want to get away from it altogether."

"But you wouldn't get away from it if you were a mine surveyor."

"No, but I might be a land surveyor, whose job is out in the open air. Or I might be something else if I could get a couple of years more education. I'm told that there are good openings in the colonies. At any rate, I'm joining this mine surveying class now to learn how to use those surveying instruments. The mine surveyor is going to teach us the use of the compass which is on the theodolite. He's going to borrow a mariner's compass and sextant as well, in order to teach us about them."

"And I'm joining a Building Construction class at Rhyd-y-pant next month," said David. "It's in our old school and from what I'm told, it's where we both joined the Form 2 class five years ago."

"That'll be very awkward for you won't it ?—living in Gorlan, working at Dolyderi and going to a class at Rhyd-y-pant ? Will you go to lodge at Dolyderi ?" asked Derfel.

David shook his head with conviction.

"I'm not earning enough now to keep myself in lodgings, and every penny is wanted at home. You must remember that we're six children and I'm the only child really earning, and now not enough to keep me. You're only three children and you're earning good money, while the brother next to you has started earning as well. We're not so well off, but my father and mother say that I sha'n't lose the chance of this class at Rhyd-y-pant."

"But how are you going to get there ?" persisted Derfel. "Mr. James's other apprentice is lodging in Dolyderi, and I can see that he'll get there, if he wants too."

"Yes. He, I and five others from Mr. James's gang at Gorlan are going there. Mine's the greatest difficulty, but I shall catch the 5 p.m. train from Dolyderi, reach home, change and walk with the others to Rhyd-y-pant and be there by 7 p.m. We shall have to carry boards and tee-squares and walk there and back in all weathers."

Derfel looked at David with kind commiseration and after a pause asked, "What do you intend to become, David ? I can't think of *you* being a mason all your life."

David by this time, felt that he was battling against the tide of circumstance and the rude awakening he had from his earlier dreams of ambition had made him more uncertain. He replied : "I don't know yet, Derfel. At present I'm learning to be a mason and I want to be a good mason. This building construction class will help me to do that, but it will also give me the theory of the other building trades. I shall spare no effort and I shall pull out somewhere in time. My work and walking is so tiring, and after I reach home at 7.15 p.m., I wash, have my food and then go to bed. I can see no time for studying until Saturday afternoon. In any case, that is the only time the parlour is free, for my brother must have quiet for his study and he plays in the Gorlan Soccer Team on Saturday afternoon. The boys attending the Building Construction Class from Gorlan, Rhyd-y-pant, and Dolyderi, will all have a better chance to study than I have."

"But you won't let the others beat you, will you, David ? "

Derfel's tone showed some anxiety. He felt that the honour of their old form at the Rhyd-y-pant School was at stake.

David replied : "I'll do all I can, but more than that I can't do ; but I want to learn all I can about building work now."

CHAPTER XXVII

LET THERE BE LIGHT

WE are now approaching the period when the Religious Revival of 1904-5 swept through the mining valleys with a consuming fire.

The religious life of Gorlan has hitherto been lightly touched upon, but its importance in the life of the inhabitants held a compelling significance. The Nonconformist Chapel stood for spiritual betterment, and to the chapel-going immigrants it meant a fellowship in a strange community.

The run of Sunday services has been outlined previously but the chapel activities extended throughout the week. Even after the Sunday evening services there were the singing schools where the chapel choirs practised for the annual chapel concerts or for the annual Cymanfa Ganu (Singing Festival) of the Sunday Schools of the valley.

The other evenings of the week were devoted to prayer meeting, band of hope for the children, men's bible class, women's meeting, literary and debating society for young people and other events of lesser regularity. Some of these were confined to winter evenings, but others were held all the year round.

It will be seen that the chapels of Gorlan contributed to the religious and cultural aspirations of its people, and helped incidentally to encourage young men and women to take part in the meetings; they learned to stand up and hear themselves speaking, no easy task to the average novitiate. In this way the chapels were not dependent on a fixed liturgy but fostered the means of individual expression. Without this ability and the freedom in which it flourished, it is doubtful whether the religious revivals of the Nonconformists could have taken place in the manner they did.

From such a democratic attitude to church activities sprang many of the public speakers of the miners and also the young men who responded to the call of their Master and who went into His ministry.

We have seen the developing urge of Derfel to leave the pits for a better calling, even although he had gone down the pit of his own free will. This was the experience of numerous young miners and, in the impetus of resurgent ambition, they left the pits for other callings.

Many felt the call of religious service and filled pulpits in England and Wales, while others asked for the greater sacrifice of the missionary fields of foreign lands. Several, like Nemiah, were forced through sacrifice to family necessity to "fall by the wayside." Some were tried and found wanting in either character or ability, and went back to their former occupations. The

Nonconformist Church selected its leaders with careful discrimination, and many thus chosen ultimately filled high positions as principals, professors and tutors in the university or ministerial colleges, or became the chief men, such as moderators, in their denominations.

Their struggles through the preparatory schools (like Gwynfryn), the ministerial and the university colleges were heroic. On Sundays they would fill varying pulpits as "supplies," for which they had a small fee and the practical experience of conducting services. During the vacations they would still do this, while some would return to the pits as well in order to help their finances for the coming session. It was a hard school of adversity which helped them all the better to preach the democratic gospel of their Master.

Next door to the Bowens a family of miners had produced three notable men in that way, and on Saturday nights David could faintly hear the youngest of the three brothers rehearsing his sermons for the following day.

It must not be expected that these young men developed long faces, as fiction writers are prone to depict. They took the humour of the pit with them, and were a jolly lot of fellows. Their college careers were as full of mischief as those of other college students, and their initiations and "rags" quite as demonstrative! Not that they were without an occasional black sheep which had slipped into the college fold despite the care of selection; but Nonconformity had a way of ridding itself of undesirables and their careers as ministers did not usually last long.

Those were the days when Wales fostered improved education and its young people in the congregations began to read the Bible with more logical thought than their fathers had done. The mass congregation, however, still thought in terms of literal interpretation rather than that of metaphor, allegory and poetic expression.

The nineteenth century, which had only just passed out, left a powerful influence of pulpit men who were giants of their time. These drew many thousands to open air meetings from distant places and left deep impressions on the souls of the Welsh *gwerin*. Nor must it be thought that these men as well were without humour of their time, and stories about them lasted long after they had passed over to that world which was ever in the theme of their sermons.

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The humorous references to the metaphors they adopted were remembered. One silver-tongued old veteran, referring to the Israelites crossing the Red Sea in their flight from Egyptian slavery said: "And these, my friends, were the first in history to be known as the 'Coldstream Guards.'"

The humour was not all from one side. The same old veteran

was giving up his church for retirement, and was present when the church meeting decided upon the stipend of his successor. He chimed in : " Well I'm glad that you're going to pay him a little better than you paid me ; I didn't get enough to buy my wife a pair of clogs ! "

The following morning he went to the door to take his letters from a grinning postman. On the threshold he saw laid out in a neat row three pair of clogs. He had been married three times !

Another old warrior (for young ministers dared not do what their older confreres did) was filling a pulpit away from home one Sunday and all the hymns were set out in large figures in a frame behind him.

During the first part of the service one of the deacons was blowing his nose with unwonted vigour and noise. When the preacher came to give out the hymn that preceded his sermon, he motioned in the direction of the hymn numbers and said :

" Under the circumstances which we're faced with this morning, we'll change the number of the next hymn. The hymn number we shall use isn't that shown behind me, but number 692." — He then gave out the first verse, the solemnity of his face adding to the occasion—" What's this trumpet hear I sounding," etc.

(Beth yw'r utgorn glywai'n seinio).

The congregation did all they could to smother their grins, and the offending trumpet sounded no more that day !

The practical joking of their college days remained with many of these ministers, and many are the stories of the practical jokes they played on each other.

Stories of Welsh "*hwyl*" in preaching were numerous. This was a form of half-singing the sermon as the preacher's emotion was rising. It may have started as a means of getting the voice to carry effectually in open air services and to very large congregations. It was not shouting as many imagine—no more than yodelling is—and it helped the preacher in making a fervent appeal.

Towyn Jones (1858–1925) was one of the very best preachers in the Congregational connexion and became a member of Parliament. He was a man of most rapid utterance and was known as " The Welsh Express."

Preaching at a chapel one Sunday he got into *hwyl* and his notes got higher and higher as he went on. He was much encouraged by a listener in the front row of the gallery in front of him, who craned forward to catch the preacher's every word. Towyn hoped to fetch an " Amen " from this appreciative listener, but nothing came. As Towyn reached the climax of his sermon, with his voice raised to its highest note, the listener took out a tuning fork, sounded it, and put it to his ear. Much to Towyn's discomfiture, he ejaculated in a stage whisper to those around him : " Double C, boys, myn diawl."

The use of the latter epithet was not the language of the

Nonconformist church ! Even the Prince of Darkness was alluded to with greater reverence.

Another preacher who was noted for his humour was Dafis, Login. He had trained his voice to remarkable power, which was a great asset in open air services. On one occasion he was the third and last preacher in a special open air service, to which many had walked for considerable distances. Before he started his sermon he told the congregation : " I don't like this system of making a sandwich " (third layer) " out of a preacher. Some of you must be tired and want to go home ; if you do, you can start now and I'll take care that you'll hear me for two miles on your journey anyway ! "

Nor was the solemn occasion of a funeral free from humour. Dafis, Login, was conducting a funeral service on a warm summer's day in the kitchen of a small house. There was a large fire there, and with the congregating of mourners, the preacher was obliged to read the scripture at a small table near the fire. The perspiration was streaming down his face and the heat became more than he could endure. He suddenly raised his head from reading and pointing to the door said : " For goodness sake, open that door, or there'll be more than one corpse to be taken out of this house ! "

Nor were the district meetings of the connexions without their own humour. A chairman with a reputation for punctuality saw one of his members limping into a meeting a few minutes late :

" Where have you been, Titus Lewis ? " was the stern query.

" Bathing my sore foot, sir," was the comical answer, which brought the still sterner query : " Don't you know what the scripture tells you about that sort of excuse, Titus ? ' If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off ! ' "

" It is not my right hand, sir, it is my left foot," was the final answer in this repartee, which convulsed the meeting with laughter.

That same chairman was a notable divine who had his own ability to find a suitable answer. At the end of a religious service a minister tested the meeting and asked all those who wished to " enter the kingdom of heaven " to stand on their feet. Practically the whole of the large congregation responded. To his intense disgust he saw the divine still seated. He turned to the offender with some heat and said : " Don't you want to go to the kingdom ? "

" Oh, yes," was the ready reply, " but I don't want to go with an excursion ! "

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Edward Mathews, Ewenny (1813-1892) was an out and out Glamorganshire man. He came from the old stock of the county which boasted the origins of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) and Admiral Mathews (b. 1676). The latter built the present bishop's palace at Llandaff, near Cardiff, in 1736, as his residence.

When between fourteen and seventeen years of age, Edward Mathews was mining iron ore at Hirwaun, and shortly after was

recommended to go preaching. At this occupation he worked hard, and rising at 6 a.m. daily, he devoted an average of five hours a day to his sermons.

His college education was for less than a year and took place when he was twenty-nine years of age. This was spent at the Trefeca college of the Methodist connexion. In his removals from place to place in Glamorganshire, he spent the years of 1852 to 1864 in Ewenny in the Vale of Glamorgan. This name clung to him ever afterwards, even when he had left this small but historical village. A Benedictine Priory was established there in 1140. A fine church and the remnants of other buildings still show elements of fortification, possibly as a sanctuary.

The buildings are of Norman design and well worth a visit. Barrel vaulting with the weak elliptical groin arches are to be seen there, and give some credence to the theory that Gothic vaulting developed as the result of the weakness of such barrel-vaulted structures.

Edward Mathews became a preacher who was much called for throughout Wales during his life-time. A man who heard him on many occasions in North Wales told the author that no words could describe Mathews' preaching.

Although he had never been in a theatre in his life, he had the natural characteristics of a great dramatist. He projected into his preaching the whole of his wonderful personality. He could take his congregations into a new realm of thought and feeling, and his voice carried much more than mere words. It was as if he used the many remarkable powers given him and developed their usefulness to the very utmost.

To achieve this he did not rehearse in front of a mirror as others were prone to do. He seemed to feel what was the right thing his personality could do. His face contained drama itself and his eyes could denote any range of feeling. His hands were as expressive; with a simple gesture he could take his congregation into a world which language could not reveal. He could readily bring the laughter of a great joy as easily as the tears of a great sorrow from his congregations.

Persons who saw both Mathews and Irving stated that the former was the greater dramatist of the two. When Mathews was preaching in London on one occasion, Sir Henry Irving was prevailed upon to listen to him. Although not understanding a word of the Welsh sermon, the greatest English actor of his day stated that if Mathews had taken to drama he would have been one of the greatest actors the world has seen.

This Prince of the Pulpit was of average height, but exceedingly broad-shouldered. His face and body denoted strength, and that strength he used to the utmost in the cause of his Master. His voice was strong also, and in the open air he could be understood a mile away, when it rose to its declamatory and rhetorical heights.

He had much physical strength and his treatment of the large

pulpit bibles was harsh. The churches knew this and did not place new and expensive bibles for Mathews to destroy. On one occasion, when describing how Good and Evil were struggling for supremacy, he used the pulpit bible to illustrate his point, and put one hand to struggle against the other. The astonished congregation saw the large bible come into two halves in his strong muscular hands. On another occasion he dropped the bible on the bald head of a deacon who was nodding sleepily in a seat beneath the pulpit. Then he coolly asked the offender to pass the bible back to him. The incident looked like an accident but the congregation had their doubts.

To demonstrate how the debts were paid he would go through the motions of writing a receipt out on the bible in front of him. He would then tear out the page, fold it, and hand it over to an imaginary recipient !

His congregations watched his every action and listened to every word. He preached with such force that men and women would rise in their pews because they could not remain seated and the responses to his sermons were frequent and fervid.

On one occasion he used a shipwreck at sea to illustrate his text. A man who was strange to Mathews' methods was in the chapel gallery. The preacher vividly described the ship in a terrible storm as it was flung from the crests of mountainous waves into their cavernous depths. His body swung into harmony with his words. The gale held the hapless craft in its power and hurled it on to a hidden rock. Through the broken bow the water poured in and the stern was rising in an ominous manner.

The listener had followed Mathews' every word and gesture and the reality of the scene was so strong on him that he rose in his seat and screamed out " God Almighty ! The ship is sunk ! "

In the Rhondda on another occasion he described the giant Goliath being slain by the small stone-slinging David. So vivid was his dramatic interpretation that an old collier ejaculated at the climax, " Got him ! "

He could carry on an imaginary dialogue between two persons with great effect. When describing the father of the prodigal son begging the elder son to come into the feast he followed the earnest entreaties of the father with the churlish refusals of the son. So vivid were his impersonations that a rough young collier sprang to his feet in agitation and called out to Mathews " Let the silly devil stop outside, and be hanged to him ! "

At Swansea a young Englishman went to listen to Mathews, and said afterwards with enthusiasm—" The greatest sermon I ever heard ! " " But you did not understand it ! " was the rejoinder. " I understood it all," was the answer, " I saw it on the ends of his fingers."

Such was the preaching of the "glad tidings" of salvation in Wales during the nineteenth century. The best of the preachers had their strong and weak moments, and even Mathews was not always on the top of his form.

Yet the pull on the congregations was to draw them towards the good life and away from evil, and ultimately to "the peace that passeth all understanding." We have seen that the use of words and the appeal to reason were not enough. Man had a spirit and he had to *feel* the need and the sense of righteousness. The stimulus of profound human emotion is capable of carrying a man to greater endeavour than that of reason alone.

The preachers of the nineteenth century were well aware of this and they sought to send their message into the very core of each human being. Man to them was a soul, a spirit with emotions that ranged between good and evil. They sought to discover, improve or strengthen what was good and to eliminate, check or weaken what was evil.

This was the religious background to the Wales of the twentieth century. Gorlan, like other Welsh villages, was steeped in that tradition. And David Peter Bowen, Derfel Pugh and other boys were brought up in that environment.

We have seen how the reprobate Cradoc Bowen, who had never been a member of any church, had reared a son, Thomas Bowen, who had turned away from his father's bad example. David's father had been influenced by his religious, good-living mother and his cousins. Consequently, he saw the evil of the life of Cradoc Bowen and looked elsewhere for guidance.

Seeking more exalted standards, he went to Hermon Chapel, Abergwaun, and became a member there. He "sat at the feet" of its notable pastor, William Jones, whose discourses opened up his mind and soul to a better life than that of his father. There he met Naomi, and there they were married.

There is a North-country saying—"Clogs to boots,—three generations; boots to clogs,—three generations." Old Cradoc Bowen had come down the scale from respectable forebears whose occupation of one farm could be traced for three hundred years. He struck the final note of the "boots to clogs" stage.

Thomas Bowen started the first generation on its "clogs to boots" process when he became linked with Hermon Chapel and its associations. With his father's example as a searing memory, he sought to be a better husband and father than old Cradoc Bowen had been. In this endeavour he derived inspiration and incentive from being an attentive listener to the religion preached him Sunday after Sunday. Discussions with others on the great principles propounded became a matter of course in those now bygone days.

Welsh Nonconformists became acute theologians. A famous clergyman in the metropolis said that he feared only one of his

flock on the subject of theology, and that worthy was one of the many Welshmen selling milk in London at the time !

The Nonconformist Chapel in the nineteenth century was the stimulus to education, but that education was largely confined to the sphere of religion. The twentieth century commenced with the firmer establishment of secular education, and worlds other than those of religion opened up to the young Welsh people. They were therefore obliged to be concerned with a greater range of knowledge than were their fathers. The novelty of the new sphere held a fascination and the older spheres lost much of their enchantment in consequence. Evolution was sifting the sands of Time.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE BIG MEETINGS IN GORLAN

THE Sunday of the "big meetings" of Bethel arrived and this brought the congregation into touch with the religious revival for the first time. It was now November, 1904.

The "big meetings Sunday" was an event of great note in Gorlan and often called for the purchase of new hats and clothes, as well as boots and shoes that squeaked their newness as their wearers made for their pews. The ill-ventilated chapels were generally filled to suffocation. Seats were carried from the vestry and deposited in the aisles in order to accommodate more persons. These entrapped the people in the other seats and had to be removed before the proper exits could be made. When they were still insufficient, people stood in the hall doorways and in the vestry doorways on either side of the pulpit. Others were sitting on the stairs of the big seat and the pulpit.

On such occasions persons belonging to other chapels and those who were not members anywhere would go as a matter of course to hear the "star preachers," or less prominent preachers with "star sermons." Some of the "hearers" who would not seek membership were great "sermon-tasters." Owing allegiance to no particular church, they would be seen regularly at all the "big meetings" of the village. There are many, however, who never visited a place of worship at any time and to this class belonged a man who was sitting in Nemiah's seat at the very back of the main floor, on this particular occasion.

David, in looking around in the evening service, saw him. His name was Hugh Jones and his nickname was Huwcyn Cardi.

This meant that he was a native of Cardiganshire. So, David thought, Nemiah had prevailed at last in getting Huwcyn to Bethel Chapel. We have quite a story to relate about him in the next chapter.

The two special preachers were sitting in the big seat this evening before the service commenced. One was much older than the other and this meant that the junior preached first and the senior last. They would have communicated with each other as to the texts of their sermons beforehand so that they would not be preaching from the same text.

The pastor gave out the hymns and a visiting preacher opened the service with the customary scripture-reading and prayer. He explained that the senior preacher had selected the scripture-readings. The congregation wondered as to the purpose of this selection, but they had great faith in the wisdom of this fine old man.

He was tall and bearded and he had the face of a saint. When calling on his flock on his rounds in a large city a little girl answered

the door. She ran in telling her mother that Jesus Christ stood outside! His method of preaching was winning rather than denunciatory. When he commenced his preaching career as a young man, a friend told him never to preach about Satan, for he would only depict his character with a certain amount of charm!

When on a preaching visit to Bangor in North Wales he was taken by his host, a very old friend of his, on to one of the foothills of the Snowdonian Range. This overlooked the ancient city and the range itself. It was a glorious summer day and the old man gazed his fill in silence for some time. He saw the majestic range of mountains etched in sunshine and shadow and the trees in the glory of summer foliage. He saw the beautiful ribbon of the Menai Straits. The glory of it all filled the old man's soul with reverence and worship. He turned to gaze again at the range of mountains and, as he looked at them, he burst out "Well done, God!"

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The scripture reader commenced his reading. The first portion dealt with John the Baptist calling sinners to repentance and baptism.

Before turning to the next part of the scripture, the reader said : " You will see, friends, that the scripture-reading turns on that one word 'Repentance.' You have heard what John said : now we shall see what Jesus said when he, in turn, started preaching."

He recommenced without turning over any page :

" From that time Jesus began to preach and say : Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The reader now turned over the pages and as he did so, he said : " Now we shall see what the apostles said in their turn."

He went on reading another portion which dealt with the same theme.

Then the reader turned to the story of the persecution of the early church and read how Pharisee Paul—the terrible persecutor of the first Christians—had condoned the death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, and heard the latter's last words when dying under that fatal hail of stones—"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Then to conclude the reading followed the story of Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus when he saw a vision and heard the reproving voice of Christ. After that, Paul entered the gate of Damascus, a zealot persecutor and a self-righteous Pharisee no longer, but a repentant convert who was to carry the Christian faith to many lands and to suffer much for his faith in Christ.

The reader closed the book and his readings had stirred the congregation to a feeling that the meeting would be inspired. David had given a covert and quick glance towards Huwlyn Cardi and found him listening intently.

The pastor then gave out a hymn, and the prayer of supplication followed. By this time, the congregation were feeling an influence which they could not very well explain.

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The reader came down from the pulpit and his place was taken by the junior preacher. He came from the Dare valley and his face bore the trace of long emotional strain. His voice was rather hoarse and carried much feeling.

He expressed his regret at leaving the senior preacher to preach the single sermon of the morning's meeting, and even now he had come without a prepared sermon. He went on to say that the religious revival had reached his village a week before (November 13th, 1904) and that successive meetings had been held night after night until late hours. He said that the Holy Ghost was doing great work there and that many converts had accepted the belief in Christ. He said that it was a wonderful experience ; men and women, who had followed religion all their lives, had had new experiences and under the influence of the meetings had felt an exaltation such as they had never felt before. Others who previously had not sought membership of Christ's Church, as well as persons who had never been to any church before, had come under the great influence and had joined the churches as members. A new and better life was sweeping over his village and most of the people were now imbued with the desire for spiritual betterment. He went on :

"As I told you, I have no sermon, but our beloved brother who follows me suggests that I read the old, old story, so familiar to all of you—that of the Prodigal Son."

He had opened the Bible previously, and he now commenced reading :

"A certain man had two sons ; and the younger of them said to his father : Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me ; and he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in the land ; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country ; and he sent him unto his fields to feed swine. And he would have fain filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat ; and no man gave unto him."

The preacher looked up from his scripture and said :

"That is how we are when we leave the care of the Almighty Father and when we disassociate ourselves with all the elements of the good life. We go to feed swine and become little, if any, better than the swine themselves. In any case we eat their husks instead of the better food that God prepares for us. But I have not finished my text yet, so we will go on reading and find that

Jesus is again teaching the value of repentance : that is, a change of heart. Let us proceed then."

So he went on reading, and again David threw a quick glance towards Huwlyn and found him still attentive.

"And when he came to himself, he said : How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare and I perish of hunger ! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father."

Then the preacher read of the glad reunion of the father and the repentant younger son.

He closed the book and looked up at the large congregation that overspilled the seating accommodation. He addressed them further :

" You will see that the prodigal son had a true repentance.

" While he had money to spend he was probably proud and arrogant, and while he had wealth he also had so-called friends to flatter his vanity. But adversity brought him into a better frame of mind, and his soul became humble and repentant. It was from there that he had a fresh start, just as the converts in the Dare valley are starting a new life. They have turned their backs on the world of sin and its attendant suffering and have come into their Father's house and entered into the glad tidings of the Christian message." *J.W.*

He sat down, while the congregation relaxed from their rigid attention. They had heard of the revival indirectly, but here was a man speaking to them who had taken part in it and who had seen its effects.

The pastor gave out the next hymn. By now it was very warm in the chapel although it was a November day. Attempts were made to open windows while the hymn was being sung, some ineffectually.

While the singing was going on the junior preacher came down from the pulpit and the senior preacher took his place. He sat down to wait until the singing was finished and the congregation re-seated themselves in their cramped positions.

Then he rose to his feet—a tall, princely figure with his eyes shining. He looked at the now silent and intent congregation and his gentle yet audible voice was heard :

" We have had a great meeting so far ; let us hope that the Holy Spirit, which is evidently here amongst us, as it is in the Dare valley, and indeed wherever it is called for, remains in every heart for the rest of the service. We have listened with great joy to what our beloved brother has told us, and with the help of that Holy Spirit I will try to carry on further. In fact, I am going to finish off the story of the prodigal son and add a little to it. There are two sons in the parable and my text deals with the second."

The congregation wore pleased expressions when they heard this for they knew that he would bring them to a fitting climax. They now began to realise how the scripture-readings were also a part of the general conception which the saintly old preacher had outlined. He then completed the story of the prodigal son, and dealt with the elder son's anger upon hearing of his young brother's return and effusive welcome. To the father's invitation to join in the feast he gave upbraiding answer, and the father's love for both his sons, the unrighteous in repentance and the righteous in churlish anger, still gave sympathy, patience and appeal.

The preacher turned over the leaves of the Bible remarking : " That is the end of the parable. You will notice that there is nothing to denote that the elder son went into the house ; but there is no word either to say that he did not go eventually. He stood for the Pharisees, the self-righteous people of that time, and before we finish to-night we will see if the Pharisee entered into the kingdom.

" Now I shall complete my long text with another few verses of another parable of Jesus and they are as follows :

" Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself : ' God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican ; I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess.'

" And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, ' God, be merciful to me a sinner.'

" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

He looked up at the congregation and he knew that as the junior preacher had given only a simple discourse, they would expect a real sermon. This meant some opening remarks and the usual three " heads " for the division. It gave the sermon a sense of order and sequence and it was easier for the congregation to follow, while the three heads would be discussed in the coal face during the next few days. He commenced :

" In these gospels we have the wonderful parables by which Jesus taught ; you know of them. The Sower, The Good Samaritan, The Hidden Treasure, and so on. Amongst them is this beautiful story about the Prodigal Son. You can call it a fable if you like, for in the earthly story you have to find the heavenly meaning. Our dear brother has dealt with the first part and I shall try to deal with the other. Both are important for I suppose that nearly all of us come within the categories of the two sons.

" So I will divide my sermon into three heads. Firstly the attitude of the elder son ; secondly, his need ; thirdly, the attitude of the father.

"Firstly—the old preachers denounced the elder son strongly, but let us examine the position and see if we cannot find something worthy of sympathy and toleration."

The congregation smiled at this, knowing that denunciation was not the role of the preacher. His better theme was the effect of love rather than the effect of fear. He went on :

"Now let us look at the typical Pharisee whom the elder son represents. He was a good type of man in his day, and lived up to the standard of the law of Moses and the prophets, and was proud of it. He even paraded this virtue, and hypocrisy was the inevitable result. Yes, it was this pride of virtue that Jesus assailed continually. It made the Pharisee self-righteous and it deprived him of that great human asset—humility of soul.

"But we as Christians must remember that it was Christ who established higher standards than those of Moses and the prophets and opened the doors of religion to everybody—yes even to the publicans and sinners whom the Pharisees despised. Not only that, but as the elder son kept his father's estate going in his brother's absence, so did the Pharisees keep the organised religion of the Jews going.

"John and Jesus preached repentance for *all*, and the Pharisees resented it. What had *they* to repent about ? They studied the law and the prophets continually and were able to say with justice that they carried out the commandments in every particular. But Jesus was enlarging the ideals and extending the scope of the Jewish religion, and the Pharisees resented it for at least two reasons : one, because it set up so high a standard that it was to them unattainable, and the other because they could not admit his authority to do this."

The congregation was again rigid in its attention and these "fair-play" tactics for the "villain" intrigued them immensely. David thought that the preacher was doing the same sort of thing as the author who had turned his brother's villain in the serial story into a hero.

The preacher then went on to the second head of his sermon and emphasised the need of right-doing people to acquire humility of soul and that this was the antidote to self-righteousness, hypocrisy and arrogance. The elder son could *not see* his need as easily as the younger son. The preacher enlarged on this theme greatly.

He then paused and the congregation got ready for the third point and the concluding peroration. Huwcyn had listened intently to all that was spoken, and he did not realise that the polite-minded congregation around him were not a little curious as to his reactions. He was a well-known figure in Gorlan on account of an event which had taken place a few years previously. Nemiah and his little family saw to it that he was given a hymn-book with the hymn number found ready and their attitude was kind and respectful. The preacher went on :

"Now I come to the third and last head : the attitude of the father.

"Well, there are enough fathers here who know what their feelings are towards their children. Every good father is concerned with the *need* of the child. His love does not turn on what the child *deserves* if he is wicked. If the need is for sympathy or comfort, then that is what the child gets ; if the need is for correction, then the good father corrects. With both the sons in the parable, the father gives sympathy and comfort. He can see through the faults of both and he desires that they should be happy. So he acts accordingly and even goes out to entreat with his elder son.

"Our God, the Father, is like that. His concern is not with what we deserve—not even with what we as sinners feel we deserve—but with what we *need*. Jesus has depicted him as a God of Mercy and it was He who first called him 'Father ;' we are all His sons and daughters—every one of us—the prodigal and the elder sons—the publicans and the Pharisees—yes every soul in Gorlan and everywhere else in the world. Jesus said God is a Spirit and that we must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. The Spirit of God is calling everyone here to-night to enter into His house."

He closed the bible and the congregation knew that he was at the end of the sermon and that the concluding peroration was to come. He was not the type to go into great *hwyl*, but they knew that he felt his mission intensely and that he would finish his sermon on a suitable note.

"Well, my friends, as we conclude this service we can ask if the elder son is still outside the gate ? Is there *anyone* here who is outside the gate ? We will ask him to come inside—whoever he may be ; although his sins may be great, he is invited to come inside and partake of the feast. Jesus has thrown open the gate of repentance to one and all, and he died that his message might live. We are here to-night with that message and all the sons and daughters of mankind are called to enter through the gate.

"Even the Pharisee—the elder son—he too shall enter through the gate and be received into the fulness of the better life. I can see Paul, the Pharisee, on the way to Damascus. Learned, religious, self-righteous and proud is young Paul, and he is out to stop the spread of the Christian faith. But he carried the insistent memory of the dying Stephen in his soul, and can hear the words of a greater religion than his own Judaism ringing in his ears, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' This revelation of forgiveness leads to another revelation, and on that dusty road to Damascus, with his party of Temple soldiers around him, he heard the direct call of Christ—'Paul, Paul, why persecutest thou me ?' The elder son loses his pride and his self-righteousness when he hears that call, and the ever-open gateway of repentance is before him. A proud Pharisee went out

through the gate of Jerusalem, but the gate of Damascus let in a great Christian who had known repentance and humility of soul. The elder son had entered into a greater inheritance."

He paused for his concluding sentence and then went on :

" Let each and every one of us enter into the better life, for His dear name's sake, Amen."

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His sermon ended, he sat down to the accompaniment of many re-echoing "Amens."

The congregation relaxed from their rigid attention and sat back with much satisfaction. The sermon had been extended much more than is described above. In fact, just written words cannot describe the real Welsh sermon. It had carried a great artistry in elocution. The voice of the preacher had fallen or risen as the occasion demanded. The words had come slow or fast for the same reason, while the pauses and the variations of inflections and intonations had all contributed to make the rendering of the sermon as effectual as possible. The preacher had practically no gestures as compared with those of the previous century, but when he used them, they carried their significance. His intense sincerity also carried its own power.

When he described suffering his voice was poignant with emotion, and when he came to joy his voice rang with the gladness of the Hallelujah.

He had only a small slip of paper on which the headings of his sermon were written. Nonconformity did not like the reading of a written sermon for this checked all the artistry which the congregations expected. The sermon must come as from a musical instrument and that instrument was the God-given personality of the preacher. It was as though he was a grand organ with innumerable stops, but with the additional assets of language, facial expression and gesture.

When the preacher sat down, he had preached for three-quarters of an hour. Unlike many, he appeared in no way exhausted. That was another point to learn—to avoid exhaustion as this soon conveyed itself to the congregation and they became exhausted in turn.

The pastor rose and stated that the day's services had been full of blessing. The senior preacher would give a lecture on Doctor Barnado on the following evening.

Admission to such lectures was usually obtained at a shilling each for adults, with children at half-price.

The pastor also stated that he would give the weekly invitation for those who desired membership to stay behind in the second meeting. Then he gave out the hymn and the large congregation sang with that unison and fervour the Welsh people can give. Their exaltation from the services came into the poetry of the words and the emotion of their souls. They sang the last four

lines the second time and then someone started singing the whole of the last verse all over again.

The ordinary service was then over and many persons went out as usual. In fact, some of them would have to go on night shift later. The preacher also left the pulpit.

The Bowen family all stayed for the second meeting, as also did Nemiah's family. David noticed that Huwcyn was going out as did all the veteran "hearers only" of the gospel. One candidate remained behind and he had probably followed the custom of advising the pastor before-hand that he would do so.

When the extra seats were removed back to the vestry and all departures had finished, the pastor made note of the candidate who sought membership. He spoke of the services and hoped that their influence would bring in more candidates later. He then motioned to the senior deacon who got up and said that as it was late he would say only a few words. He felt that they should not be discouraged that only one candidate had stayed behind despite the powerful messages received that day. He went on :

"There was a 'big meeting' in Scotland once, and the special preacher had given a forceful message. He, too, was disappointed that only a young boy had stayed behind to become a member of the Church of Christ ; but that boy was David Livingstone, who later went to Africa to conquer that huge continent for Christ. So we mustn't be discouraged, for who knows what the influence of the services have done in this chapel to-day ? "

He sat down and the pastor gave the blessing and called for the vesper hymn. After this was sung, all the congregation went to their homes, and another "big meetings Sunday" was over in Gorlan.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE DARKER SHADOWS

HUGH Jones, or Huwcyn Cardi, as he was more familiarly known, found himself in tragic circumstances which brought him unwelcome notoriety. This happened several years before—in the year of the old Queen's Diamond Jubilee (1897). We must now go back to that period.

David had delivered meat to Derfel's house, and both boys came up the street, the former with his errand basket on his arm. As they neared the Gorlan Hotel, a fight was being turned out on to the Square in the usual manner. The two boys drew into the crowd to watch the fight.

The contestants were two young fellows, both nineteen years of age, and they continued their fight on the square. Both were unknown to David, but Derfel said—"Huwcyn Cardi and Tim Evans. Huwcyn is the brother of Ted Jones who is in our school-class."

The two fighters went for each other in a vicious temper, and Huwcyn was getting the worst of it. The other man was far nimbler on his feet and evidently knew the art of self-defence much better than Huwcyn. Then someone saw a policeman's helmet approaching at some distance away and shouted the warning word "Police".

The contestants' friends parted them and hurried them away from the scene. The fight was unfinished but there was little doubt that Tim Evans was the winner.

What the fight was about was not revealed, but having had a few drinks the men became quarrelsome and, after some very heated words, Tim struck the challenging blow. That blow led to the tragic circumstances which followed.

Huwcyn's family hailed from Cardiganshire, but had lived in Gorlan for ten years or so. Huwcyn lived with his parents and was the eldest of several children.

Tim came from Monmouthshire and had come to Gorlan only recently. Both his parents were dead, and he and his only brother were in lodgings at one end of the long street in which Nemiah lived. The brother was only sixteen years of age and they both worked in the same pit and in the same district as Huwcyn and Nemiah. Tim had worked at Rhyd-y-pant before going to Gorlan and considered himself a great exponent of the art of self-defence.

Arising out of quarrels in the pits or in the public houses, or in both, it was well-known that some of them ended in surreptitious prize-fights in lonely spots on the mountains. These were generally accompanied by backers who gambled on the results.

This quarrel was well-known in the pit district in which they worked, and it was difficult for the two contestants to avoid each other, as Huwcyn tried to do. So for two or three weeks the quarrel was brewing, and Nemiah and another collier did all they could to make peace between the two young fellows. Their greatest difficulty was with Tim, who by now considered himself as good as victorious and who wanted the unquestioned laurels of definite conquest.

Both had friends of the so-called sporting fraternity, and these saw an opportunity of furthering the fight and were busily undoing all that Nemiah and his friend were trying to do.

About four o'clock on a Sunday morning in the middle of May, Nemiah was wakened by a knock at the front door. It was a discreet sort of knock and he went down to answer it. At the door he found his collier friend, who was evidently in great agitation. Both went inside and Nemiah put an overcoat over his night attire.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I haven't slept all night, Nemiah. Before going to bed I had word that Huwcyn and Tim are going to fight out their quarrel this morning at five o'clock. We must stop it, Nemiah, there's very bad blood between them by now, thanks to the way their supporters are fomenting it."

"Where's the fight to take place?" asked Nemiah.

"On top of the mountain above Rhyd-y-pant and on this side of the valley. When I heard last night, I decided that they'd better fight out their quarrel and have done with it. But as I lay awake I felt more and more uncomfortable and feel that we should stop it."

"Don't you think that we should tell the police?"

"No! No!" was the vehement answer. "They would both be arrested and the stigma of it would cling to them. No, Nemiah, as I'm lame from the accident I had in my foot I think that you had better go there and stop it."

"Very well," was the reply, "but I still think that the police ought to be told right away. I'll go up and dress now and explain to my wife where I am going."

He went upstairs and told his wife the story as he knew it. She protested that he should not be mixed up in the affair; but Nemiah clearly saw his duty before him and would not be dissuaded.

As he finished dressing, a knock was heard on the bedroom door, and Sarah, the fifteen year old sister of Marged John, appeared at the door. "What's all this commotion?" she asked.

Nemiah replied: "Marged will tell you, Sarah; I have no time to spare. You had better slip into bed beside her and cheer her up a bit."

With that he hurried downstairs, put on his boots, talking to his friend meanwhile. They parted at the door, and Nemiah made for the rendezvous of the fight.

He found that he was by no means the only one. The interested sportsmen of Gorlan were making for the same spot. He did not tell them what he intended doing, for he found all those he talked to keenly concerned with the prospect of watching the fight. They even looked upon him with suspicion.

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The crowd grew as they neared the rendezvous until they were about a hundred strong. When Nemiah arrived the combatants were stripping for the fight. It was now close on five o'clock.

From what he found later, neither of the combatants had come from their respective homes and the fight had been kept rather secret for fear of police interference. It was evident that the combatants were in fighting mood, and that two or three of Tim's supporters were under the influence of drink. They had been up all night in order to be at the rendezvous at the appointed time and had been carousing. Both the combatants were sober and Huwcyn wore a vicious look. Foul language was plentiful. The contest was a prize fight for £1 a side, but the backers had probably their own gambles on the result. It was a bare-fist fight.

Nemiah went straight up to Huwcyn as the latter was being rubbed down by his seconds. He came straight to the point.

"Huwcyn, I want you to give up this fight and go home. You know it's illegal and may land you in terrible trouble. It may be the death of you, as it was of the poor fellow who was killed on the mountain opposite only a year ago. I beg of you, Huwcyn, now, before it's too late, to give up."

Some of Tim's seconds drew near and heard this, and the seconds of both sides became angry. Their muttered threats, accompanied by foul oaths, to drive Nemiah away had no effect on him. He looked straight at Huwcyn who, addressing the seconds, said :

"You leave him alone, all of you. I know Nemiah John better than you do ; he's trying to do me a good turn, at least he thinks so." Then addressing Nemiah he said :

"Look here, Nemiah, I must have fair play, and you mustn't stop me getting it. You know very well that I've not wanted this fight. Ever since we had that bit of a scrap on the Square, Tim has been on to me. He wanted to fight me last Mabon's Monday, a fortnight ago, and I put it off."

"Well, can't you put it off now, Huwcyn ? "

"No Nemiah, I can't. Tim told me that I was a coward, like all the Cardis, and that's the limit. I've stood his taunts against myself, but I can't stand his insult against Shir Aberteifi. (Cardiganshire). I'm proud that I'm a Cardi, Nemiah, and I won't stand for anybody insulting the place where I was born."

Nemiah knew only too well that this county patriotism was too deep to be ignored, so he tried another tack :

"Look here, Huwcyn ? I was told that when you fought on the Square, Tim had the best of it. He's only egging you on in order

to win this fight and crow over it. You may be killed and look at the trouble that will be to your parents."

Huwcyn's face softened a bit and then set into a greater determination. He said :

" They're Cardis, too, Nemiah, and I must show what a Cardi can do. If I am knocked out in this fight, well, I shall go down fighting to the bitter end. My mind is fully made up on that."

By this time, the referee was calling for the contest to commence, and Nemiah, with a heavy heart, was jostled aside by the supporters.

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Nemiah now looked upon the scene. The site was well chosen. It was like a large saucer, with a flat piece of ground in the centre ; the rising sides made almost a complete circle. He looked at the crowd around him and saw their eagerness to see those two young fellows battering each other. He was sorry that his better judgment had not prevailed and that he had not called on the police. It was too late now ; it would take him the best part of an hour to fetch them, and by that time, he surmised, it would be all over. He would stand by and try to stop the fight at an opportune moment. He looked at the coarse faces of those who staged the fight with some disgust. They were the real instigators, and had probably supplied the taunts that had brought the fight about. Two of them were loud in their upholding of Tim Evan's ability. Huwcyn's seconds did not talk so much.

The combatants faced each other. They were stripped to the waist and wore knickers and light shoes. Hucwyn looked a very sturdy, stocky figure. He was rather short, but very well-made. His neck was somewhat short and thick, his head was round, and his dark hair cut very short. Tim was of medium height and of lighter build. His whole tense frame denoted quick action. His hair was short and brown.

He came in with a quick movement, and struck Huwcyn a few sharp jabs at the body, and, as the latter returned his blows, Tim drew away for another opportunity. As he did so, Huwcyn aimed a vicious blow at his head, but this he ducked easily, and laughed. Huwcyn's face set tighter when he heard that laugh. It was like another taunt.

The fight went on. Nemiah noticed that Huwcyn was not trying to defend his body, and his short neck did not help him to duck his head. Tim was winning on points in the first rounds, but failed to knock down that sturdy, well-planted form of Huwcyn.

Then Nemiah realised Huwcyn's tactics. With the light dancing Tim his only hope of winning lay in giving a hard vicious blow when Tim was hitting him. For every two blows Tim struck, Huwcyn could give only one back. But at each blow Tim received he knew that his opponent was hitting him as with a sledge hammer.

Although punishing each other on head and body with cruel severity, it became evident that Huwcyn's dogged resistance was

superior to that of Tim. He was receiving more blows than his opponent but he could take them better, and his vicious blows were beginning to tell on Tim.

After the start of the fight the farmer came and ordered them off his land. He was told with a lot of bad language to mind his own business. To prevent him going to the police, the crowd jostled him to the inside beside Nemiah. So there were two unwilling observers to the fight.

After the third round Tim appeared to be badly knocked about by those short-armed vicious blows of Huwcyn and in the sixth round he fell beneath the blows.

Nemiah saw his opportunity. He and the farmer went over to Tim and his seconds and told them to give in. The luckless Tim did not have much say in the matter, for his seconds, fearful of losing the money with which they had backed him, said that he was very fit and had a lot of fight in him.

In the seventh round, he was again knocked down, and this time Nemiah tried Huwcyn and his seconds. He found that they were willing to regard the fight as finished if Tim gave in. But Tim, who had boasted so much of winning the fight, had too much pride and too much courage to give in ; his seconds kept telling him, too, that he was the better fighter, but must hit harder.

Nemiah and the farmer had to admit to each other that the fight was a fair one, and that the referee was doing his job efficiently. If, in the excitement, one of the opponents made a questionable blow, he was warned not to repeat it.

So the fight went on and on, with Tim being struck to the ground in almost every round, while Huwcyn had stood sturdily on his feet right through. And still Tim and his seconds would not acknowledge defeat, and the courageous Tim was sponged and encouraged to face up to Huwcyn after his many falls.

Nemiah counted the rounds which were now nearly thirty, and again went up to Tim's seconds and told them to desist. Tim was in a really bad condition. His chief second said, however :

"No, he is as good as ever and fighting like a little game cock."

The latter portion of the statement was only too true, but the former part of it was absolutely untrue. Nemiah was shocked to find the seconds so cruel and inhuman.

After the twenty-ninth round, Tim had to be lifted up to his feet, and his seconds sent him into the ring again. His appearance was ghastly ; he was shivering and his teeth were chattering and yet he went forward gamely to meet his opponent. Huwcyn saw his condition, and giving him a comparatively light blow, floored him for the last time. He was now definitely unconscious, and the farmer told his seconds, " You had better get him some water ; the poor fellow seems dying."

The fight was over, and the crowd melted away very quickly. The result had proved to be more disastrous than they had expected, and the farmer's words scared them.

It was now half-past six and the game combatants had fought a terrible battle which had lasted an hour and a half.

Tim's seconds tried to revive him to consciousness, but without avail. So they carried his prostrate form towards Rhyd-y-pant and took it into a cottage on the hillside. They arrived there shortly before seven o'clock ; then all the seconds left Tim there, telling the tenant that they were fetching a doctor.

Huwcyn's seconds gathered around him, and Nemiah watched them with grave interest. They helped him on with his clothes, gave him a drink of brandy, and they all hurried off in the direction of Gorlan. Nemiah followed. One by one Huwcyn's seconds left him to go their different ways and to reach their homes before Gorlan was astir.

Eventually, Huwcyn and Nemiah were alone, and the former sat down heavily on a bank. He was exhausted, and was beginning to realise his position. Nemiah sat down beside him. Huwcyn said :

" Better if I'd listened to you, Nemiah. Why do you stay with a blinking rotter like me ? The others have all left me. Do you think that poor blighter is dead ? If he is dead, will they hang me for killing him ? "

Nemiah broke in on his tormented and spoken thoughts :

" He wasn't dead, only unconscious. Let's hope that he'll pull through. You didn't intend killing him in any case, and that fact is important. But we mustn't stay here ; come, I will help you home."

This brought Huwcyn face to face with another fact.

" How can I go home like this, Nemiah ? My poor old mother will go into a fit if she sees me, and when she hears that Tim Evans is half-dead, she'll be in an awful state. My father and mother didn't know that I was going to fight. No, I can't go home. I'll stay in the mountains until things blow over a bit."

Nemiah looked at the bruised and battered Huwcyn with compassion. He thought for a little while and then said :

" No, my friend ; you must have those bruises attended to at once. If you'll not go to your own home, then you must come to mine. Marged and I will do what we can for you."

Huwcyn looked at him dumbly for a moment and then said in a broken voice :

" Why do you call me your friend, Nemiah ? You are a good man and I am only a blinking blackguard. I'm not fit to go into your house. You go home and I'll stay here and get out of this mess somehow."

Nemiah put his hands under Huwcyn's armpits and lifted him to his feet." He said very kindly :

" No, Huwcyn, my Master would not like me to leave you here. You come with me. Here, put on my mackintosh and hat, and we'll go through the back lanes to my house so that you'll not attract the attention of the few that may be on the streets."

He suited action to words and they entered Nemiah's house through the back. They met with no-one on the way.

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When Nemiah left the house, Marged and her sister, Sarah James, stayed in bed for some time. But their anxiety for Nemiah prevented them sleeping. Marged knew of Nemiah's great heart and greater courage and she feared for his fate with a gang of rough callous men associated with a prize-fight.

So both got up about six o'clock, lit the fire, tidied the kitchen and made themselves a cup of tea. Then they took care to have the kettle full and boiling, and set about making preparations for dinner. The two boys were very small and were left sleeping.

Marged, looking up the garden through the kitchen window, saw Nemiah coming down the path, accompanied by a strange figure in a hat and mackintosh. She hurried to the back lobby door and let them in. She was relieved to see Nemiah safe, but was a little frightened at the sight of Huwcyn. Nemiah placed his friend in the armchair by the fire, and addressed the scared Marged and Sarah :

"A nice, hot cup of tea, and some food for my friend Huwcyn here, and then we shall attend to his wounds."

The women obeyed in silence, and Huwcyn brightened up a little. Then Nemiah spoke again :

"You, Sarah, go without any fuss and ask our good friend, Naomi Bowen, to come here and help us. Ask her to bring some sticking plaster."

Sarah obeyed, and then Nemiah started stripping Huwcyn in order to bathe his wounds.

When Sarah and Naomi came in they saw Huwcyn stripped to the waist, and Nemiah washing his wounds. They saw a pitiable sight. His body was all blue with innumerable bruises, his hands were much swollen, his left eye was shockingly discoloured ; there was a cut under his right eye, another small cut on the left cheekbone, and yet another on the right side of his jaw. Such was the price Huwcyn paid for standing up for thirty rounds against the dexterous bare fists of Tim Evans.

Nemiah explained briefly to Naomi what had occurred and her pity was stirred at hearing the story. She took charge immediately ; with kind and ready hands to help her she had the cuts washed and covered with sticking plaster, and the bruised torso bathed. Then a clean shirt of Nemiah's was put over his aching body and his clothes put back on him.

Meanwhile, a fire had been lit in the parlour and the sofa drawn before it. There Huwcyn was laid to recover some strength in order to face any further ordeals which were bound to follow.

Naomi drew the curtains so that curious eyes might not peer into the room. Then she saw the patient asleep and left quietly for her own home.

Nemiah did not go to chapel that morning but, after seeing Huwcyn taking a good mid-day meal, he decided to go to Sunday School, and find out how the land lay.

During the Sunday School meeting, the news of the prize-fight was covertly discussed, and some new facts were forthcoming.

Tim's seconds left him at the cottage ; he died shortly after, and the tenant sent for the police, who summoned the doctor of Rhyd-y-pant as well. From a Gorlan pit pay packet in the dead man's pocket, they found out his name and his young brother was called to identify him. The lad was tearful, and stated that he had begged his brother not to fight and did not know that the fight was arranged for the morning. His name was Jack Evans.

The sergeant of police was looking for Huwcyn and his seconds, and it was thought that they were hiding in the mountains. There was great indignation about Tim's seconds, who had left him to his fate at the cottage, and did not send a doctor or return there themselves. This was a severe aspersion on the sporting life of Gorlan, and brought severe condemnation in its train, much of it from the sportsmen who were not at the fight.

Nemiah listened but did not divulge his part in it for the time being. Huwcyn's parents lived near the Bethel Chapel ; so on the way home, he called there and told them the whole story. The parents were very distressed, and blamed themselves, unduly perhaps. Before removing to Gorlan from Cardiganshire, they were intermittent attenders at a chapel. After reaching Gorlan, they left off going altogether, finding the code of conduct expected from chapel-goers too restricted. Now they realised where their relaxation from the old codes had brought them. They thanked Nemiah in their tears and their sorrow, and wondered what Huwcyn's fate would be. Nemiah relieved their anxieties as much as he could and hurried home.

He found Huwcyn much recovered, but still very sore. After they had tea in the parlour, he broke the news of Tim's death to him when they were alone.

"Poor blighter," said Huwcyn ; "I'm sorry to have been fighting with him, although he called me a cowardly Cardi. You were right, Nemiah, and I was wrong. But what can I do now ?"

"Well, Huwcyn," was the reply, "the police are looking for you, and I think that you had better go down to the police station at once and give yourself up. I see no other way for the present, and it's better for you to go to the police rather than they should come and fetch you."

Huw cyn got to his feet at once and said :

"You are right, Nemiah, and I don't want to bring the police to your house. Let me out through the back lane and I'll be there in no time."

He looked at Nemiah and there was a trace of tears in his eyes as he held out his hand, which Nemiah took warmly.

"You're a good friend to me, Nemiah. You shouldn't have

brought me here and gone to so much trouble about a blackguard like me. All of you, and that woman Naomi, have done all you could for me, although I don't belong to your class at all."

"Oh! That's all right, Huwcyn; we're only doing what the Master wants us to do—no more, and possibly much less. We'll get our things; for I'm going to the police station with you."

They dressed him up as well as they could, and Sarah placed a scarf she had knitted around his neck. He looked humbly at her young, sweet face, his thanks choking in his throat, and went out with Nemiah.

They both went to the police station, where the bearded sergeant was glad to receive them. Nemiah told the whole story and said that he could be called as a witness at any time. With a cheerful greeting to Huwcyn and the sergeant he went away and left his friend there. As he went through the doorway, he turned and looked at the sergeant and the latter came to him. In a low voice Nemiah said :

"Those plank beds of yours must be very hard, sergeant, and poor Huwcyn's bruised all over. You'll make him comfortable as the Good Samaritan did to the man who fell amongst thieves."

The sergeant's eyes lighted up and he nodded as Nemiah turned away.

The police at Rhyd-y-pant got busy as well. They had the evidence of the farmer and the doctor, and from one of the fight spectators of Rhyd-y-pant they had many names. The police of both villages had a busy time hauling in the referee, seconds and many spectators, all of whom were thoroughly scared by now. Apart from Huwcyn, they arrested seven of the men actively engaged in staging the fight.

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The inquest was held and a verdict of manslaughter was found. The prisoners came before the magistrates and the police charged them with the crime of manslaughter. The case was remitted to the assizes which were held six weeks later.

Huwcyн's battered condition elicited a good deal of sympathy when he appeared before the magistrates. After all, he had shown a staunch heroism to have stood up for thirty rounds and taken so much punishment. The provocation he had received from Tim also brought him a lot of sympathy, and to the Cardis he was the hero of the hour.

By the time the assizes were held his wounds had healed and his eyes looked less frightful.

The eight prisoners appeared at the assizes charged with the crime of manslaughter. There was no denying that the fight took place or that Tim Evans was killed in the fight. One of the best Welsh counsels of the day was briefed for their defence. The doctor, Nemiah and the farmer were the chief witnesses.

The doctor stated that Tim's body revealed that he was badly

punished ; he had a contusion at the left ear, his left eye was discoloured and he had several bruises on his chest and body.

After conducting a post-mortem operation, the doctor found an effusion of blood under the scalp.

There was a laceration of a blood vessel which caused a clot of blood, and the effusion of blood on the brain had caused death.

Nemiah and the farmer gave evidence which was corroborative as far as the actual fight was concerned. The counsel for the defence drew from Nemiah the important evidence as to provocation and how Huwcyn had tried to avoid the fight. There were murmurs of sympathy for Huwcyn when this evidence was given, and it must have impressed the judge and jury. The counsel for the defence pleaded for leniency for Huwcyn on the grounds of provocation and his age of only nineteen years.

There was not much sympathy for the other seven prisoners who had fostered the fight.

The judge summed up the case for the jury. He said that Hugh Jones was guilty because it was by his blow that Tim Evans' death occurred. Those who assisted were aiders and abettors.

The jury found Huwcyn guilty of manslaughter, but added a strong recommendation for mercy on account of provocation and extreme youth. They also found five of the other seven prisoners guilty of aiding and abetting.

The judge, addressing Huwcyn in the dock, said that he was satisfied, on the evidence given by two men who had tried to stop the fight (Nemiah and the farmer), that the fight was a fair one. He was quite sure of that, and the death of Tim Evans was not anticipated. But it was illegal and a dangerous thing in which to participate. He agreed with the recommendation of the jury with regard to Hugh Jones' age, and he wished to give it full effect.

The judge went on to say that he very much doubted whether the principal in the fight was really more guilty than the others. (There was a murmur of approval in the court at this). Undoubtedly all were guilty together.

So under the circumstances he sentenced Hugh Jones and five others (whom he named) to three months hard labour.

There was a murmur of approval in the court at this, and a sense of relief prevailed. Nemiah and the farmer shook hands with Huwcyn as he was taken away and Huwcyn thanked them for all they had done on his behalf. His parents were also there, and thanked Nemiah for what he had done to help Huwcyn in the tragic circumstances.

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When Huwcyn came out of prison, he did not accompany the others to celebrate their release, but returned to Gorlan with a resolution to lead a better life. He returned to work in the same pit district and Nemiah did all he could to help him. His devotion to Nemiah was almost dog-like.

Yet while some sow the good seed, others insist on sowing the

tares. Although not contacting his old associates of the fight, others took their places. They sang his praises as the man who had stood up to thirty rounds and gave him the new nick-name "Huwcyn Thirty." They insisted on taking him for drinks, and David saw him one day bouncing out of the Gorlan Hotel much the worse for drink.

Nemiah saw the danger of this and had some dread that Huwcyn would land in more fighting troubles in consequence. So one day as they were walking alone together from the coal face to the bottom of the pit, he broached the subject :

"Look here, old friend, I'm sorry to see you going back to the old life which brought you no real happiness. You get under the influence of drink and another lot of pals are flattering you and in that way you may land in more trouble. Why not find other associations? Why not join the evening continuation classes, a choir, or a church? Why not get a bicycle and join the Gorlan Cycling Club, and go to the Workmen's Library to read more than you're doing at present? You know that I speak to you as a friend who desires nothing but your welfare. Will you not leave this old life and try a new one?"

Huwcyn was silent for a while and then he replied :

"No man had a better friend than you've been to me, Nemiah, and I know that your advice is good. But I find it difficult to follow. By no man's hand but mine Tim Evans was killed, and until my dying day I shall see him lying where I struck him down. His brother Jack stopped me one day after I came out of prison and said that God's curse would stay with me for all my days for having killed his brother. He said that I was a Cain and that the mark of Cain would be on me while I lived."

He paused and Nemiah sensed that he had not finished. So they walked on in silence for a while and then Huwcyn continued :

"You see, Nemiah, it is only when I'm drunk that I really forget it, and so I am only happy when I'm drunk."

As Nemiah paused to reply, another party of men caught them up and the conversation could not be continued.

Nemiah thought the matter over that night. He had the answer to Huwcyn's trouble, but he felt that his friend could not understand it. That process of understanding he thought could only be gradual and might take some years.

So he had word with the pit overman, and when the opportunity came some time afterwards, Nemiah and Huwcyn were working on the same coal face and in adjoining stalls. In company with their *butties*, they would sit down to have their meals together.

In that way, Nemiah exercised his influence on Huwcyn and this influence brought Huwcyn to Nemiah's house to have a smoke and discussion. Ultimately, as we have seen, it brought him for the first time to a place of worship when he attended the big meetings discussed in the last chapter.

The prodigal son had started on his journey home.

CHAPTER XXX. IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

ABOUT mid-December, and following the big meetings in Bethel, Evan Roberts, the young revivalist, visited Gorlan. He brought with him the singers which made up the party who had banded round their leader to win the valleys for Christ.

Evan Roberts was a young man of twenty-six years of age. He was born and lived at the small borough of Loughor on the Glamorganshire coast, seven miles west of Swansea.

His father was typical of the best Welsh working-class and had seen employment in the pits as a pump-man and as a collier. His mother was of the same hard-working type. They had fourteen children, of which eight survived, and Evan was the fifth of the eight. With a family of ten to provide for, this thrifty and industrious couple managed to become the owners of a detached double-fronted cottage. Their background was deeply religious and this they imparted to their many children.

Evan Roberts went down the pit at twelve years of age to earn five shillings a week as a doorboy, but at sixteen years of age he was cutting coal for five shillings a day. At twenty-four years of age he went to learn a trade as a country blacksmith, but another call took him away from this occupation after he had been at it for fifteen months. He, like his parents, was thrifty and industrious, and had saved £200 during his working career. We get a sidelight here on how the parents had not taken all the children's earnings, but saw to it that they saved money for starting off in married life.

The religious side of Evan Roberts' life became more and more intensified in his manhood years ; so at twenty-six years of age he entered a school at Newcastle-Emlyn, South Cardiganshire, on September 13th, 1904, with a view to becoming a minister. While there for six weeks he struggled to study, but the call to mission was too insistent and too strong for him and the Bible was the only book from which he received solace of soul.

There was considerable religious ardour in South Cardiganshire at that time which seems to have started with the experience of a young girl named Florrie Evans in New Quay, Cardiganshire, during the February of 1904. Evan Roberts himself had prayed for thirteen years for the greater manifestation of the good life amongst the people, so that his soul-process was evolutionary rather than that of a sudden and all-changing revelation.

During September, 1904, his long-held desire to see a religious revival in Wales was much strengthened, and he felt a great urge to leave his student life and to go on a mission tour through Wales. He had £200 which he could spend on expenses and he had a small

band of nine zealous young people around him. One was a fellow-student named Sidney Evans, and the other eight were young women who included Florrie Evans. He even worked out how long the mission would last with his £200, and estimated it to be of twenty-eight weeks duration. He also set his target for the salvation of one hundred thousand souls.

On Sunday, October 30th, 1904, at a service in Newcastle-Emlyn, Evan Roberts sat in a pew and there was some *silent influence* touching the feelings of the congregation. His countenance changed under this influence and his face shone with a holy radiance. Before the day was gone, he testified that the Holy Spirit had spoken powerfully to him to go home and work amongst the young people of his native Lougher. He heard the message audibly—"You *must* go—you *must* go."

The following morning he left the school, which was the means of getting him into a ministerial college, to respond to the message and he was destined to return to his studies no more. He had gone through a period of struggle, the aim in one direction being countered by a greater inward call to another direction.

When he changed trains at Carmarthen town he gave some astonished onlookers a brief sermon. After giving his message a wave of happiness came over him, and a great gladness filled his soul. He attributed this to the conquest of inclinations which otherwise hindered him. It was a flood of relief really that a sharpened conscience had swept away the insistent obstacles that prevented him reaching to a still greater life of the Holy Spirit. In this experience we see the forerunner of what the Revival converts were to experience later. He became possessed of a new strength; instead of being timid, shy, nervous and even gloomy in religious circles, he acquired a divine boldness, a new courage and an ineffable joy.

On the Monday night he started his religious revival in his home church of Moriah, Lougher, and for thirteen days the services were continued daily. Many felt stronger in spirit and had an inward peace they had never had before. One night, so great was the enthusiasm that a vast congregation remained praying and singing until half-past two next morning.

By November 10th, 1904, the extraordinary effect of Evan Roberts and his services became *news*, with the result that he was invited to Trecynon in the Dare valley on Sunday, November 13th. By this time the singing of hymns had come to play a big part in the meetings and soloists sang English and Welsh hymns with great effect. One of the most popular was :

"Throw out the Life-line,
Someone is drifting away,"—etc.

On Sunday morning, after being up in services until five o'clock that morning, Evan Roberts started on his first missionary journey to Trecynon. He took with him five young women who were imbued with the revival spirit. The appearance of a whole party

instead of one preacher disappointed the congregation, while the new methods of simple appeal which Evan Roberts used were strange to the members. It is here that we see the reactions of a congregation to an appeal which was so entirely different from that of Edward Mathews, Ewenny.

The Sunday but stirred his listeners to new thoughts, but the Monday brought the mission into a flood that swept through the valleys for a long time. This was what the junior preacher at the big meetings at Bethel had referred to and the chapels of the Dare valley were attended by many who had not been inside a religious building before.

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It was on a Sunday morning in mid-December, 1904, that Evan Roberts entered Bethel Chapel, where the congregation had been waiting him for some time. Meanwhile the organist on the gallery had sung a Revival hymn to his own accompaniment ; otherwise a silence prevailed. The pastor said to the congregation :

“ We are probably awaiting Evan Roberts ; let us rather expect the arrival of the Holy Spirit.”

At last Evan Roberts came and went up to the big seat, accompanied by the soloists. The pastor put his hands on Evan Roberts’ shoulders and told him something very earnestly. David could not hear what was said.

Evan Roberts faced the congregation. David saw that he was a tall young man, about six feet high. He had a fine figure and a saintly face. His movements, as he walked past the Bowens’ pew, indicated speed and vigour. He was clean-shaven and his mouth indicated both tenderness and determination. His nose was rather aquiline and his brown eyes were large and beautiful ; they were arresting as David looked at him, and were affectionate in their expression. Over his high forehead was a good head of dark auburn hair, with the trace of a curl hanging over it.

This was the missioner who in four weeks had set alight the revival flame in the mining valleys. The full chapel attested to his power and as he came in a hard-faced woman reporter followed him with an open note-book. David felt some resentment as he saw this latter and strange intrusion.

Evan Roberts addressed the congregation. He had no sermon, but discoursed in a simple and natural way, but with the holding power in intense sincerity. He did not attempt eloquence, rhetorical flights, or the poetical language so beloved by Welsh Nonconformist congregations. The Fressmen of the period attributed his power to a mesmerism, occultism and magnetism, but as far as could be seen he had not the slightest artificiality of manner. He spoke :

“ My message is a simple one. I am here to talk to you about Repentance.” Here his fine eyes swept over the entire audience. “ Our old church members at Lougher can’t understand why

there should be a need of such a message to them. Yet if we are to obtain the Holy Spirit we must repent."

David saw that his face was pale as were the faces of all his party. The strain of the spiritual drive of the past few weeks was making its mark on them. The vitiated air they breathed continually in the over-filled and badly ventilated chapels must have made for physical weakness. Evan Roberts went on :

" My revival message is that of God's. I want you to remember and act on four points. Firstly, that we confess openly to God any sin we have not confessed before ; now we cannot do that without a repentant spirit. Secondly, we must do away with anything questionable in ourselves ; we must have conviction before we can achieve this. Thirdly, we must give prompt obedience to the influence of the Holy Spirit ; we must acquire its power before we can do so. Fourthly, we must confess Christ openly and publicly ; we must have faith in Christ before we can do that."

He enlarged on this theme, sometimes with emotion, as when he referred to the sacrifice of Christ, but generally his shining face betokened the great joy of salvation when the soul was freed of bad habits and their attendant worries. His were the " glad tidings " the " gospel " of Christ—which were open to everyone. No sinner need go without expiation. Salvation meant that all our past sins were wiped out in true repentance and belief in Christ.

The reality of what he felt drew all eyes to him, and as he spoke some quiet influence took hold of the congregation.

His meetings were noted for their informality and, as he finished speaking, a stranger from the Dare valley on the other side of the chapel to the Bowens, got up and started to pray. He was an illiterate convert and his pleadings jarred the susceptibilities of the regular chapel-goers. He had not been praying long when one of the women soloists who accompanied Evan Roberts got up and with a beautiful voice sang a revival hymn effectively. In this she was joined by the congregation and the meeting was restored to its power.

Evan Roberts then tested the meeting by asking all those who believed in Christ and his message to stand up.

Huwlyn Cardi, who had been prevailed upon by Nemiah to attend the meeting, kept his seat.

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During the afternoon Evan Roberts appeared at the chapel at which Derfel attended. By this time the trains had brought into Gorlan a surge of people who wanted to see and hear him. Amongst them were W. T. Stead (1849-1912) the famous journalist, Gipsy Smith the evangelist and many from distant parts of the United Kingdom.

The former was then reporting for the " Daily Chronicle." He was the son of a Congregational minister and was born in

Durham. He had been editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and he founded *The Review of Reviews*. He started a penny *Masterpiece Library* and was the author of many political and other works. As a peace propagandist, he travelled Europe and America and he was keenly interested in social work, especially criminal law amendment. He was later drowned in the "Titanic" on April 15th, 1912. Gipsy Smith lived until August, 1947.

In that afternoon meeting the emotions of the congregation were aroused. There was intensity of feeling, the pangs of repentance, the cravings for forgiveness, earnest prayers for the salvation of friends and relatives and the power of wonderful singing. It was all unconventional and yet with a unison of purpose

It was the stirring of profound human emotion. While it was still under some control of the mind, it was effectual; but when it had lost that anchorage completely it was inclined to hysteria. It was the occasional hysteria that was the most painful and the regular chapel-goers did not like it.

Evan Roberts went in his quick manner to a young man who cried for forgiveness with agony of soul and prayed by his side. Another young man was unable to continue his prayer when he quoted what his father adjured him on his death-bed.

During the evening about fourteen hundred people tried to get into the third chapel attended by Evan Roberts on that day. Hundreds failed to reach the doors and carried on a service outside in the cold December air. Their fervid songs resounded in the narrow valley.

Gipsy Smith and Evan Roberts took part together in the evening service in the chapel. W. T. Stead wrote his impressions of that day in the "Daily Chronicle," extracts of his report being as follows :

"As spring-time precedes summer and seed-time harvest, so every great onward step in the social and political progress of Great Britain has ever been preceded by a national revival of religion. The sequence is as unmistakable as it is invariable. It was as constant when England was Catholic as it has been after the Reformation. . . .

"'The British Empire,' as Admiral Fisher is never tired of repeating 'floats on the British Navy.' But the British Navy steams on Welsh coal. The driving force of all our battleships is hewn from the mines of these Welsh valleys by the men amongst whom this remarkable religious awakening has taken place."

"After attending three prolonged services at a village of five thousand inhabitants lying on the other side of Pontypridd, I found the flame of Welsh religious enthusiasm as smokeless as its coal. There are no advertisements, no brass bands, no posters, no huge tents. All the paraphernalia of the got-up job are conspicuous by their absence."

"Neither is there any organisation, nor is there a director, at least none that is visible to human eye. In the crowded chapels

they even dispense with instrumental music. On Sunday no note issued from the organ pipes. There is no need of instruments, for in and around and above and beneath surged the all-pervading thrill and throb of a multitude praying and singing as they prayed.

"The vast congregations were as soberly sane, as orderly and at least as reverent, as any congregation I ever saw beneath the dome of St. Paul's, when I used to go to hear Canon Liddon, the Chrysostom of the English pulpit. But it was afire with a passionate religious enthusiasm, the like of which I have never seen in St. Paul's. Tier above tier from the crowded aisles to the loftiest gallery, sat or stood, as necessity dictated, eager hundreds of serious men and women, their eyes riveted upon the platform or upon whatever other part of the building was the storm centre of the meeting.

"Employers tell me that the quality of the work the miners are putting in has improved. Waste is less; men go to their daily toil with a new spirit of gladness in their labour. In the long dim galleries of the mine, where once the hauliers swore at their ponies in Welshified English terms of blasphemy, there is now but to be heard the haunting melody of the revival music. The pit ponies, like the American mules, having been driven by oaths and curses since they first bore the yoke are being retrained to do their work without the incentive of profanity. There is less drinking, less idleness, less gambling.

"The revival is borne along upon billowing waves of sacred song. It is to other revivals what the Italian Opera is to the ordinary theatre. It is the singing, not the preaching, that is the instrument which is most efficacious in striking the hearts of men.

"Three-fourths of the meeting consists of singing. No one uses a hymn-book. No one gives out a hymn. The last person to control the meeting in any way is Mr. Evan Roberts. People pray and sing, give testimony; exhort as the Spirit moves them. As a study of the psychology of crowds, I have seen nothing like it. You feel that the thousand or fifteen hundred persons before you have become merged into one myriad-headed, but single-souled personality.

"A very remarkable instance of this abandonment of the meeting to the spontaneous impulse, not merely of those within the walls, but of those outside, who were unable to get in, occurred on Sunday night. Twice the order of proceeding, if order it can be called, was altered by the crowd outside, who, being moved by some mysterious impulse, started a hymn on their own account, which was at once taken up by the congregation within. On one of these occasions, Evan Roberts was addressing the meeting. He at once gave way and the singing became general.

"The prayers are largely autobiographical, and some of them intensely dramatic. On one occasion an impassioned and moving appeal to the Deity was accompanied throughout by an exquisitely

rendered hymn, sung by three of the singing sisters. It was like the undertone of the orchestra, when some leading singer is holding the house. . . .

"They called it the Spirit of God. Those who have not witnessed it may call it what they will; I am inclined to agree with those on the spot. For man being, according to the Orthodox, evil, can do no good thing of himself, so, as Cardinal Manning used to say, 'Wherever you behold a good thing, there you see the working of the Holy Spirit.' And the Revival, as I saw it, was emphatically a good thing."

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The following day Nemiah and Huwcyn were having their food together while their butties were filling the coal they had just cut into the trams.

"What did you think of Evan Roberts, Huwcyn?" asked Nemiah.

"Well, I should say that he's a very good young fellow," was the reply, "but rough chaps like myself don't understand all that he said."

"But did you *feel* his message, Huwcyn?"

"Yes, and no. I felt that as one of the congregation there was a lot of feeling, but for myself, didn't feel anything. My parents felt very much at Saron Chapel yesterday afternoon, and last night they stayed behind in the second meeting and are trying to become members of that denomination again."

"I'm glad to hear that, Huwcyn; they were members in Cardiganshire and will be all the better to have rejoined the chapel. Were they happy about it?"

"Yes, Nemiah, I could see them very happy and as my father lit the fire this morning, I could hear him singing a hymn joyously. He was singing 'Crown Him Lord of all.'"

"Well, what about you, Huwcyn? Did they not want you to join as well?"

"Yes, they did; but somehow, Nemiah, I don't feel that I have had a proper desire to join a church. It was grand to listen to those two big preachers at Bethel, and they made more of an impression on me than Evan Roberts. In fact, I am still turning over in my mind what they were saying. But I want to know more about God and this Jesus Christ that they and Evan Roberts spoke about."

"Well, what if you come up to my house to-night, Huwcyn and we can have a chat without being disturbed. I can hear Jack Evans in the distance coming along with his pony Jerry. That pony is getting quite wicked and there'll be trouble from him some day. And Jack's rather wicked too. Does he trouble you much now?"

"Whenever he gets a chance, Nemiah. He's still very sore

that I knocked out his brother Tim. I don't blame him really, for Tim was the only near relative he had in the world. But in order to avoid him and his jeers in the pubs, I've joined the Liberal Club. I get more peace there, and that's what I want, Nemiah—just peace."

"Yes, my friend," said Nemiah as they both got up to go back to their coal-cutting ; "and that's what I have been wanting you to get for years—just peace."

When they were both settled down comfortably in Nemiah's parlour that night, and Huwcyn was filling the room with the smoke of his shag tobacco, Nemiah asked him :

"Now what's troubling your mind with religion, Huwcyn ? "

"Well, Nemiah, who is God ? "

Nemiah hesitated, for he felt that it was no good going into a lot of theology with Huwcyn. He must find simple answers to simple questions. He asked :

"Don't you think that all this world is wonderful, Huwcyn ? That it's a great, big, beautiful world ? That all the sky, sun, moon and stars are big and beautiful as well ? That all the trees and shrubs, grass and flowers are beautiful too ? Well, we believe that behind all that there's a great Creator whom we call God. He's too vast to explain and we accept this belief knowing that He's beyond all human conceptions.

"We also believe that He is the Great Spirit of Goodness. Christ said that He is a Spirit and must be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth. Wherever there is goodness, then the Spirit of God is there. You cannot see a spirit ; you can see the effect of a spirit ; but a spirit is something that you *feel*."

"But what about the mind, Nemiah ? What about reasoning ? "

"I was coming to that Huwcyn. Feeling to me is represented by Spirit and Reasoning by Truth. And that combination is the God that Christ told us to worship."

Huw cyn looked dubious. Nemiah was going out of his depth. So Nemiah tried again :

"You'll agree, Huwcyn, that there's a spirit of goodness in this world and that there's a spirit of evil ? "

Huw cyn readily agreed. Nemiah continued :

"Well then, Huwcyn, the simplest way for you to think of God is as the Great Spirit of Goodness. In fact, I always refer to Him in my prayers in that way—*Ysbryd Pob Daioni.*"

Huw cyn brightened a bit and went on :

"What about this Jesus Christ ? How is He the Son of God as the preachers and Evan Roberts call Him ? How did he perform the miracles ? "

Nemiah hesitated again in seeking simple explanations. Then he said :

"If God is the Spirit of Goodness, and that spirit is in man—as it's in you, Huwcyn—then we're *all* sons of God—we've received respective portions of His Spirit of Goodness. Jesus taught us

to call God 'Father' and if that's so we are sons and daughters of God."

Huwcyn looked startled. Nemiah went on :

"We regard Jesus Christ as the Great Son of God, for we feel and know that He is the finest revelation of the Spirit of Goodness that has appeared on this earth in the form of a human being. In accepting Christ we accept that revelation. God is somewhat indefinable, but Jesus Christ is a fact in history. He lived as we live—a human being, but imbued with a Spirit far greater than ours. And with this Spirit He performed wonderful miracles. The fact that we cannot understand *how* He did them does not matter—no more than you and I can't understand how Marconi has sent messages across the Atlantic without using a wire or cable. Everything is a miracle until you know how it is done. Science is only scratching on the surface of God's Creation as yet. When the scientists seek revelations of the Spirit, then they must acquire the Spirit as well as the desire for Truth."

Huwcyn looked dubious again as Nemiah was getting beyond his depth. He harked back a bit :

"Did you say that I'm a son of God, Nemiah? I'm only a blinking rotter : a man who has killed another man : a drunkard who gives his old parents a lot of trouble and who's a bad example to his younger brothers. If you said, like Jack Evans said, that I'm the son of the devil, I could believe you. And what about what the preachers say that Jesus Christ died on a cross to save the souls of wasters like myself?"

Nemiah hesitated again and Sarah, Marged's sister, came in with two cups of tea for them. She opened the window a bit, for Huwcyn's shag was filling the little parlour with smoke. She made some jocular remark and withdrew as the two men helped themselves to the welcome tea. There was some charm in this little incident for the rough Huwcyn and he was responding to the effect of a better environment. Nemiah replied :

"Yes, Huwcyn, you've a lot of the Spirit of Goodness in you. Like all of us, you've some of the Spirit of Evil as well. That you're aware of what is evil shows that you've a conscience and in that you have a possession that should lead you to worship the Spirit of Goodness eventually. What you want to do is to make up your mind and say, 'Yes, I'm going to worship Goodness in future and with God's help, turn away from Evil.'

"About Christ dying for sinners : He certainly died in the cause of the great message He brought to us out of the Spirit of God. In receiving the fruits of that message we live on his achievement. He regarded His death on the cross and His resurrection, which certainly took place, as the needful fulfilment of that message. That my reason doesn't altogether grasp the details of the divine purpose doesn't hinder me. My faith in Christ is such that I accept from Him what my poor human reasoning cannot altogether follow. He's far nearer God than I

am and as I don't understand all the plans and purposes of the Great Creator, then it's obvious that I can't understand the whole range of thought and spirit of the Great Son of God. I feel that Christ died for you and me, Huwcyn, but that He died in vain if we don't accept Him and His great message to this world—a world with many sorrows from Evil. That's my faith in Christ. If He asks me to do something I don't altogether understand I accept His commandments and His statements and, in that way, I am a humble Christian—a follower of Christ."

Nemiah had let himself go and his religion shone in his eyes. Huwcyn had not seen him like this before and he caught sight of the impelling force behind Nemiah's utter unselfishness. He also caught some of the feeling and both men became silent.

Nemiah changed the subject to some extent :

"What about Jack Evans ? I don't like to see him getting on to you. He had made himself your enemy, Huwcyn, and I feel that the fault is not yours."

" Didn't I kill his only brother, Nemiah ? I should have followed your advice and refused to fight. I shouldn't have gone where drinking and quarrels are frequent. No, Nemiah, fair play for Jack Evans ; I can't blame him that he doesn't forgive me. I would probably feel just as he does if I were in his place."

" Have you asked him to forgive you, Huwcyn ? "

Huw cyn looked surprised and startled. He had never thought of such a thing and replied, "No, of course not ; and if I did, he wouldn't anyway."

" Well, Huwcyn, that's what Christ asks us to do—to ask forgiveness from those we've wronged. Not only that but He expects us to love our enemies."

" What, me to love Jack Evans who's always jeering at me ? There are times when I can hardly keep my hands off him."

" As a matter of fact, Huwcyn, you aren't so far from having love for Jack. You've sympathy for him, you stick up for him and you don't strike him. In fact, you more or less 'offer the other cheek' as Christ told us to do, when he strikes at you with his jeers. Think the matter over, it may be the means of doing away with the bad feeling Jack has for *you*, and to be rid of that evil feeling would be a great gain for *him*. At any rate, that's what Jesus would expect from anyone who accepts Him as His life's Master."

It was getting time for Huwcyn to go. So as he got up to leave the room, he said to his friend,

" Well, if this Jesus Christ is the same as you, Nemiah, He must be a good Master, anyway."

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After leaving Nemiah's house, Huwcyn wended his way homewards. As he turned into the Liberal Club which was opposite his home he heard the singing of hymns from Bethel

Chapel. He then realised that Nemiah had given up his usual Monday prayer-meeting service in order to talk to him. He had a glass of ale and then crossed the road and into his home. His parents realised that he was from the club sooner than usual and that he was very thoughtful.

The following day was Tuesday, and as he and Nemiah walked along from the bottom of the pit to their *talcens*, they found a small prayer-meeting in progress at one of the *partings*. All were on their knees in the coal-dust. An old collier was in earnest supplication for the safety of the souls of all who were in the pit. Nemiah and Huwcyn stopped and stood reverently by. When the old man had finished, he said : "Now boys *bach*, all who are for Christ, hold up your lamps." Every kneeling figure held up his lamp.

"That's good," said the old man, "now we'll sing the first verse of my favourite hymn—*"Saf brenhiniaeth fawr yr Iesu"* to the tune of *Bryn Terrace* and we'll go to the *talcens* singing the other verse. So they sang in melodious unison the following verse :

"Firmly stands the realm of Jesus
With its throne unstained by wrong ;
Tranquil it shall stand eternal
With its comfort and its song ;
Peace, forgiveness, balm of solace
Blends with its salvation's price ;
Grace with life for ever reigning—
Laws unite with sacrifice."

Then they all went on to their work with the hymn ringing joyously down those dark corridors. Yes, they went down those treacherous coal headings with a song of gladness on their lips, although they knew that they might be brought from there on stretchers—maimed or dead. But death had less terror as they remembered the promise of a glad resurrection.

Huw cyn asked Nemiah a few more questions that still troubled him as they again sat to eat their mid-day meal. Nemiah noticed that he was thoughtful and took care not to break in on his thoughts.

That night Huwcyn went to the Club as usual. He took his glass to a corner table and as his attitude indicated that he wanted solitude no one disturbed him. He lit his pipe and reviewed his career.

He saw himself a happy lad in the small town of Cardigan and playing with other lads on the little quay near the old bridge across the Teify. His father was an ostler in one of the little taverns that made a big business on the market day. He was taken to chapel occasionally but was expected to go regularly to Sunday school. He smiled as he thought of how he and another boy used to play truant and go down to the boats to play. His parents did not go to Sunday school so there was no great risk of detection. Once he was caught out and his father gave him a licking. That did

not help his affection for the Sunday school. He also went to day school except when his father wanted his help with the ponies and donkeys of the farmers on market day.

His father and mother quarrelled with the tavern-keeper over something and then they came to Gorlan. The Sunday now gave him complete freedom and he had joined a gang of boys who were not afraid of getting into trouble. They would play with the trolley on the pit sidings and leave it in a dangerous position without compunction. They would go on the mountain to play cards and afterwards roll stones down the mountainside quite heedless of the peril to others. He smiled as he remembered the quarrels and fights they had amongst themselves and how he had won against the hitherto best fighter.

Then his mind went to his first days down the pit and how the gang had taken to smoking and drinking in order to show that they were now men. He was expected to outvie them all, and he did.

His face sobered off as he remembered that this had landed him eventually in the prize-fight with Tim Evans. He thought of Tim's death, his own trial at the assizes and his three months in jail. He remembered his parents' sorrow about him and how they blamed themselves for his tragedy.

He drank up his ale and a sigh escaped him involuntarily. He ordered another glass.

Again his thoughts went coursing. He thought of Nemiah standing by him in all his troubles, and of the solace and advice that Nemiah had given him. Gradually he had learnt to forget the still unconscious form of Tim Evans without getting drunk to do so.

He remembered the adulation given him by new would-be friends and he thought of the friends that had deserted the dying Tim Evans. He had been secretly proud of his new nick-name, "Huwbyn Thirty," but Tim had paid for those thirty rounds with his life.

He sighed again and drank half of his ale. From Bethel Chapel he could hear the congregation singing a favourite hymn of the revival. He could hear the tune, but could not understand the words. Ah, yes, he knew them :

"Throw out the Life-line,
Someone is drifting away."

Was he drifting away? Well, he had drifted away a long time ago. What about that life-line? Yes, Nemiah was his life-line and still he was drifting, drifting, drifting.

His mind went to the big meetings at Bethel and he thought of the story of the Prodigal Son. Yes, he was that son—not the elder one who had stayed at home. Since then he had gone to Bethel every Sunday night with Nemiah and had even gone on that Sunday morning to listen to Evan Roberts.

He was now twenty-six years of age like Evan Roberts, but how unlike otherwise. His thoughts turned to Nemiah again, to

Marged his loving wife, to their two fine boys. What a chance those boys had with parents like Nemiah and Marged John!

Yes, there was Sarah James too. Her sweet and laughing face came before his mind. She had given him her scarf before he went to the police station seven years ago. What a sight he was for her to remember. He had been scared himself as he looked into the mirror of the overmantel in Nemiah's parlour. She was only a slip of a girl then, but now she was a grown woman.

"Someone was drifting away." Yes, he was drifting away—away from a good and happy life like Nemiah and his family. He was drifting to where the drunkards of the village had landed. What sights they were, with their coarse and seamed faces! They had grown old before their time.

The singing had stopped at Bethel—someone was in prayer there—it might be Nemiah. His mind turned to the Gorlan Hotel and the popular hymn of the Salvation Army used to filter in through the windows and the quarrelsome noise. He could hear it; he knew it; he could sing it; he began to murmur to himself:

"I do believe, I will believe,
That Jesus died for me;
That on the Cross he shed his blood,
And now he sets me free."

He felt some great relief; he had confessed to himself a faith in Christ—the faith of Nemiah John. What was that they were singing again in Bethel? He began to murmur the refrain with them :

"Throw out the Life-line ! Throw out the Life-line !
Someone is drifting away ;
Throw out the Life-line ! Throw out the Life-line !
Someone is sinking to-day."

He got to his feet as some "unseen" influence got hold of him. He looked neither to right nor left; he saw not the curious faces of those watching him; he left his glass of ale unfinished and passed out through the doors.

He got on to the pavement and the cold winter wind struck him chill; but his heart was warm and joyous. Still the refrain—

" Someone is drifting away."

He made in its direction. The front Bethel steps were not strange to him now. He passed through the outer door and then through the vestibule door on the right. The congregation were still singing joyously and they were seated. He did not stop—he went straight up to the big seat and dropped on his knees. The congregation hushed their singing. He knew but one prayer; he had remembered it since the big meetings. He bowed his head; the tears were now streaming down his cheeks and, in a voice choking with emotion, he blurted out, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Unnoticed Nemiah had come behind him from his pew and sinking to his knees beside him put one arm around his quivering body and continued Huwcyn's prayer with a prayer of thanks.

Huwcyn was a well-known figure and when Nemiah finished the whole congregation broke forth in a paean of praise in song.

The prodigal son had reached home at last.

§

Nemiah took him to his parents afterwards and explained what had happened. They were very glad of the news. Nemiah then went to his own home and Marged and Sarah were also delighted. Marged had some doubts about the revival, which were not unjustified. She asked Nemiah :

" Do you think that Huwcyn will stick to his present convictions ? Don't you think that he'll break out and go back to his old life ? "

Nemiah answered her with a conviction which time amply justified.

" Not Huwcyn. He's been a long time getting to where he is to-night—seven years in fact. His conversion isn't on the wave of a sudden or hysterical emotion, like that of many of the converts I am sorry to say. He has balanced his feelings with reason—Spirit with Truth, and I believe that his life is now safely anchored to the Christian faith. What do you say, Sarah ? "

Sarah coloured and turned her face away, but she answered with conviction :

" I think the same as you, Nemiah. But Huwcyn can thank you for bringing out the gold from amongst the dross. But God put the gold there to start with. I shall never forget him as he appeared here after his terrible fight with Tim Evans—a fair fight after all. If he could stand thirty rounds for the honour of the Cardis, he'll stand much more for the cause of Christ."

Nemiah nodded agreement and there was an amused twinkle in his eyes. Marged seemed surprised at Sarah's outburst of defence.

The following morning found Huwcyn waiting for Jack Evans on the top of the pit. He held out his hand and said :

" Jack, I want you to forgive me for all the sorrow I have caused you. I'm very sorry for what I did. Will you forgive me ? "

Jack looked at him balefully and refused the proffered hand.

" What ? " he sneered, " are you come to this silly revival stuff ? No, I shan't forgive you as long as I live."

Huwcyn turned away at this rebuff and joined Nemiah in the cage going down the pit. He told of his meeting with Jack, but his face was a happy one.

They got to the prayer meeting at the parting and joined in. Jack Evans passed the little meeting just afterwards and openly scoffed at them.

He had gone about a hundred yards further on when some influence got hold of him. He stopped dead in his tracks and

then turned back and joined the prayer meeting. He fell on his knees beside Huwcyn.

Again the old collier tested his meeting with a "show of lamps" and expressed his joy when he saw that Huwcyn and Jack held up their lamps.

When the meeting was over, Jack held out his hand to Huwcyn which was readily grasped. He said with some emotion :

"Forgive me, Huwcyn. Forgive me. I've known all the time that you tried to avoid fighting with Tim and that you fought him fair, man to man. Forgive me for my churlishness this morning. I feel that I've nothing to forgive you, really, but you have much to forgive me for the past seven years."

Huwcyn's face beamed with pleasure, and he said, "Well, Jack, let's forgive and forget. I've always been sorry for Tim's death."

Nerniah and the old collier were very pleased to see this reconciliation and warmly congratulated the two young men.

The hymns rang down those dark corridors with greater vigour than ever on that December morning in 1904.

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The Revival swept with increasing power through South Wales. Wherever Evan Roberts went, the chapels were packed with people. Yet his message was simple and similar to that of the prophets of Israel who saw degeneration of their race in its manifold sins and love of pleasure. It was a call to the recognition of the Spirit of Goodness and it drew many thousands in response. These people responded to the personal sacrifices expected of them, and they were brought to worship the Spirit and to realise a force that was much more than that of human beings. There was an improvement in the calibre of the people under the influence of the Revival and they came to the chapels and the Sunday schools in order to learn the ethics of Christianity as well as to pray. And they could not really pray without humility of soul, and with that great possession they entered into their reward.

Many of the regular chapel-goers were startled and shocked at the exuberance of spirit and expression of the converts. At a service in a Welsh church in the cosmopolitan City of Cardiff, when Evan Roberts was not present, a man rushed somewhat wildly into the big seat. Both his arms were held up in supplication and the look on his face was startling. Two men rushed to his aid and he turned to face the congregation. He cried out in English :

"Tell me this, tell me this, you congregation, you people that sing : I came to this meeting out of curiosity, seeing the open doors. But you don't know me. I have broken every commandment that God ever uttered, save one—I am no murderer. But I am everything else—everything else. Do you mean to tell me there *can* be salvation for such as I ?"

The affirmative answers were in bewildering number, and someone sang :

"I heard the voice of Jesus say
'Come unto Me and rest'"

Then the man fell prostrate with a heavy thud on the ground, and ready hands lifted him to his knees. A few minutes later, while the congregation sang

"I do believe, I will believe,"

he got up and faced the congregation. He then exclaimed dramatically :

"I do believe, and, God help me, I ever will believe."

This is only one of the innumerable examples of the conversions of the Revival. Emotion played a great part, and Professor (afterwards Sir) John Morris Jones said at the time :

"Emotion is a symptom, not a cause. A man is suddenly brought face to face with the fact that the world of the Spirit is a reality. How can he help feeling emotion when he makes the discovery ?"

It was said by others that the emotion arose from a deep conviction of sin and the real desire for a better life.

In Gorlan, nearly five hundred conversions were recorded up to the time of Evan Roberts' visit and it must be remembered that the revival was there for a fortnight before he came. This was about 10 per cent of the entire population, and in another two months the figure became nearly seven hundred. By that time the Revival claimed more than 35,000 converts in South Wales.

The Revival spread its influence to Abergwaun, and on Sunday, January 15th, 1905, the Rev. Dan Davies carried out a remarkable ceremony of baptism by immersion in the River Gwaun, not far from the little woollen factory at which Nemiah once worked.

It was the coldest and wildest sort of day ; hail and rain were driven furiously by a terrific east wind. Yet ninety-four converts were baptised there that morning by the pastor of Hermon Chapel in twenty-five minutes. The crowd that had collected sang hymns while the ceremony was going on.

The great influx of converts placed a great strain on the chapels. Special classes were arranged for them in the Sunday schools and at week-night meetings. In this way many learnt to read the Welsh Bible and to follow religious exercises.

Evan Roberts and his party went on their journeys. On embarking on one of these he gave away every penny he had—even in his pockets—to good causes. The £200 he saved with many years of hard work and thrift went in this way.

He was not without his detractors. Some of them, and notably the Rev. Peter Price, criticised him strongly and adversely. But this did not check him or create any animosity in his soul.

At some of his meetings he had to face the direct challenge of atheists and agnostics, who called on him publicly to give proof of his message. They expected *scientific reasoning* from a man (and a poet) who carried out his mission with *intensity of feeling*. In such cases, there was no conversion, compromise or reconciliation.

While the Revival held its greatest influence, the public-houses lost a lot of their customers and the magistrates had but little work to do.

Many surprised tradesmen found people paying old debts which were regarded as hopeless. In one case a debt of £45 was paid in this way.

Men were working more regularly, and the drunkenness became negligible. Wives of converts said that their husbands gave them twenty to twenty-five shillings a week more out of their wages. This enabled them to get better food, clothes and boots, while the houses were better furnished. This reacted greatly to the benefit of the children.

Feuds and quarrels of long standing gave way to friendship and good feeling. On the other hand, the converts had to stand up to the jeers of their old friends who were not converts. For most it meant the sacrifice of their old social habits, but they bravely faced up to the restrictions imposed by the Christian ethics they had accepted.

As the emotional wave of the Revival passed on, many returned to their old habits. Some partly returned, while others, like Huwcyn, never returned to the old life. The latter people joined up with those of the Welsh *gwerin*, who lived good, clean lives, and who reared families that were a real asset to the nation.

There was a steady improvement in the people of Gorlan for years before the Revival took place. Religion and Education were both making steady progress. As we have seen previously, those were the days when a working man, with or without family, went off on a week's carousal in drink, using the whole of his previous wages in the process. The effect on the families, who were the innocent victims, can well be imagined.

The improvement meant a lessening of vices, and this was reflected in the lessening of the drunken brawls on the Gorlan Square. Prize fights became negligible until they were ultimately unheard of. What the Revival did was to give this growing improvement an impetus. It sharpened up the dulled or slumbering consciences and brought very many to a better way of life. Consequently, it made for physical, mental, moral and spiritual improvement in the people of the valleys.

Although only a small boy, David remembered the strike mob of 1893 sweeping through Gorlan. The rough and tough element were in the front part of the mob. They carried mandril handles and looked capable of much damage. As they surged towards the pits with destructive menace, policemen walked with them. They were turned back by the mounted police that awaited them. The police followed them back and arrested some ring-leaders on the Gorlan Square.

During the Big Strike of 1898, the mob was in an orderly procession, unarmed and unaccompanied by police. They were led by their own trade union leaders, and there was no menace

in their attitude. The change of five years may be some indication of the improvement that was taking place in the people of the valleys.

The Revival lasted much longer than the twenty-eight weeks that Evan Roberts assigned to it. He made four mission journeys from his home and returned to rest in his home district in January, 1906. The period was therefore more like sixty weeks.

The strain of all this must have told on his constitution. The nerve-strain was great, while the long meetings in the vitiated air of the badly ventilated chapels must have affected him physically. He did not spare himself in his mission. After being in all-night meetings until early morning he would go out to meet the returning night shift at about 5.30 a.m. The unselfish devotion of Evan Roberts to his duty as he saw it is something to admire. He was a young man without the slightest form of guile. Yet with a great spirit, he could not have realised the limits of the flesh. Young people are generally like that, as they launch out in life's glorious adventure.

When that adventure of Evan Roberts was over, friends who loved him and his mission, took him into seclusion. It was enough to have set out in a rapid campaign to bring a hundred thousand converts to the feet of his Master. The records for Wales showed a total of 83,936, but it is not known how many of those converts later made other converts. Nor is it known what the numbers were in the Khassai Hills in far-off India, where a revival started in February, 1905, as the result of reading the account of the Welsh Revival.

People came from Australia, Africa, Asia and America, to obtain interviews with Evan Roberts. He refused such interviews for he shunned undue publicity.

The old hearers who used to go to the big meetings as sermon-tasters gave in to the more simple appeal of Evan Roberts, and joined the churches. As with many others, the Revival had wakened their slumbering consciences, and they turned their faces steadfastly to duty and to sacrifice.

Evan Roberts was obliged to go for a rest and seclusion, but in his meteoric passage he had set alight a great flame and in this brief space of time achieved the labours of more than an ordinary life-time. Surely his Master must have said :

“ Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

CHAPTER XXXI

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

SARAH James was a comely young woman with a vivacious manner. She was of medium height, slight of build and walked in a lithesome manner. Her hair was very dark—almost black and the plaited coils at the back of her head indicated that she had plenty of it. Her eyes were blue and had a sparkle in them, while her face was oval and rather pale. She dressed herself with taste and avoided the black garments so common in those days. This may have been due to her occupation for she was a dressmaker.

She had gone to Gorlan when she was fourteen years of age to learn her trade from one of the half-dozen established dressmakers in the village, and stayed with her sister and Nemiah. Then she returned to seek occupation in Abergwaun as an assistant dressmaker in one of the shops there ; but the wages were so small that her sister, Marged, and Nemiah prevailed upon her ultimately to try her luck in Gorlan. This she did. Consequently she would go to houses daily and do work there, or carry out work in Nemiah's house, where she lived. She was a great favourite with the two boys and went to Bethel with the family. The boys were now in school at Rhyd-y-pant.

Huwcyn attended Bethel regularly and had been accepted as a member. His face developed a serenity of composure and his humility of soul brought him a simple dignity which was without a sense of servile inferiority. With his visits to Nemiah's house, and, with Sarah's subtle direction, he began to acquire good clothes and to learn to look after them. Consequently, he looked a very different man from the one that David saw bouncing out of the Gorlan Hotel in a half-drunk condition some years before.

He was physically strong and a good worker as well ; he was skilled in the way he worked his *talcen*. Consequently, and with being paid on a tonnage basis, his wages were good and he now had money to spare. So he asked Nemiah to look after his savings for him, and in that way Nemiah put them into the post office savings bank in Huwcyn's name.

With Huwcyn being invited to Nemiah's house and returning from the meetings at Bethel with the family, it was only natural that Sarah and Huwcyn should walk home side by side occasionally. And the more often did Huwcyn look into the sweet, comely face of Sarah, the more did he become enamoured of her. And Sarah, who had cherished a girlish regard for a battered hero, now found herself responding to his feeling.

They were seated in the parlour one evening, where Sarah was sewing busily, and there was no immediate prospect of their being disturbed. Huwcyn tried to read the *South Wales Echo*,

but his eyes were drawn to look at her head which was bowed over her sewing. He wondered how on earth he could broach his subject. He felt that he could not come to the point in one go. So he ventured after some desultory remarks about the weather, to say : "Sarah, do you think that a girl, and a very fine girl, could take to a waster like me ?"

Sarah's heart beat faster, and she bent her head lower over her sewing. She temporised.

" You're not a waster, Hugh, and I hope that you'll not call yourself by that term ever again." She went on sewing in silence.

Huwbyn tried again : " Would any decent girl be willing to risk spending her life with me, and with such a record as I have ? "

Sarah hesitated, and still not looking in his direction, said :

" There are plenty of good men with worse records. You fight fair, anyway, and that's more than many men can say. You fought your biggest fight when you put all evil behind you ; you fought your worst enemy, and that was yourself."

She raised her head and looked at him as she continued :

" Naomi Bowen is proud of her husband overcoming what was but a little temptation ; you have done much more than that, and " here she turned to her sewing, hesitated, and continued : " *Nemiah* is proud of you." She wanted to say " *I am proud of you,*" but her modesty prevented her.

" But can you ever be proud of me, Sarah ? "

She flushed at this question, but she raised her head and looked at him with a quick glance, and answered with a catch in her voice :

" Yes, Hugh Jones."

Huwbyn's heart gave a great bound, and after a pause he ventured the direct question in a low ardent tone :

" And will you marry me, Sarah ? "

Sarah's heart sang within her. She dropped her sewing and her agitation caused her to stand and face him. She still countered :

" But you've not told me that you love me, Hugh. Nor do you ask if I love you."

He rose to meet her and held his arms open ; she slipped into them as he said :

" Of course, bach, I love you ; I've loved you ever since you put your scarf around my neck several years ago."

She rose her glad face to his, and he kissed her soft lips. They clung to his for a while, and she raised her arms and put them around his neck. Then said : " And I've loved you, Hugh, ever since then. I'm putting another scarf around your neck now. My dear ! My dear ! "

She brought her face down into his bosom, and a glad sigh escaped from her.

They clung together in ecstatic silence for some time, and then sat down together on the sofa. And there these two young immigrants to Gorlan plighted their troth, that henceforth they would travel together into the dim future of time.

Then they went to the kitchen and told Nemiah and Marged what they had done. There was a happy gathering there that night as they all sat down to supper together.

As Nemiah carved the cold veal a twinkle came into his eyes ; he suppressed himself, but he nearly said : " An evening worthy of the fatted calf ! "

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It was a late Spring Saturday when Huwcyn and Sarah went for a trip to Weston-super-Mare on the south side of the Bristol Channel. This meant a combined train journey and a boat trip. The excursion tickets were only a few shillings in those days, and it was an attractive way of spending a day.

The weather was glorious. They got to Cardiff by train, and then took a tram down to the docks where the pleasure ferry-boats awaited them. They both felt happy in this first experience of a holiday together and in making the trip for the first time. It was an enjoyable novelty.

The channel was smooth as they made the crossing. They looked around them and inspected with interest the many who had made up the number of passengers. Sarah cast a professional eye on the garments and headgear of the women, while Huwcyn was more interested in the men.

There was a party of half-a-dozen young fellows on board. They were not from Gorlan but there was no mistaking them—they were young colliers from the valleys with plenty of money in their pockets and determined to have a good time. They were rough and noisy and their high spirits kept them roaming around the deck. They had no hesitation in addressing persons who were complete strangers to them, and they certainly did not suffer from a sense of restraint.

One of them, evidently the leader, was a tall young fellow of about twenty-four years of age, and from the way he did some playful sparring with his companions must have thought himself a bit of a boxer.

Two comedians with banjos came on deck to entertain the passengers. One was short with a round face in which was set a pair of mischievous, laughing eyes. The other, in contrast, was tall and with a lugubrious cast of countenance. They both wore nautical attire, and the first impression was that they were a part of the crew.

They sang some comic songs as they strummed their banjos. One of their songs was " Two lovely black eyes." Then one took a small velvet bag around the passengers in order to accept their monetary offerings as a tribute to the musical entertainment.

They reached Weston-super-Mare and Huwcyn decided that their first item should be a good lunch. To this Sarah agreed, and afterwards they went along the woodland walks and the

promenade. Then they had tea and went to a cinema show, and took another walk on the promenade.

As they did so the party of young colliers came towards them, and it was very evident that they had imbibed too freely. They were not drunk, but in the stage the mouse found itself after drinking up some beer slops on a bar counter, after which, he exclaimed : "Now! Where is that blinkin' cat?"

The party was more noisy than before and inclined to be quarrelsome with each other. The large towns along the Bristol Channel coast knew this element only too well, and had very severe strictures about the people of the valleys in consequence. Huwcyn observed them with some sympathy, feeling that he himself had gone through that stage.

The tall leader came out in front of the others and, as he passed Huwcyn, bashed the latter's hat down over his eyes. Huwcyn took off his headgear with equanimity, and even smiled at his assailant as he put it back. He was sport enough to take a practical joke. The rest of the party howled their hilarious laughter at the exploit of their leader.

That worthy, wanting to show off further, went to lift off Sarah's hat, which was somewhat large, and to gesture as though he wanted to kiss her. Huwcyn saw that Sarah was frightened, so he pushed her gently between himself and the angle of a kiosk and faced the revellers.

When the party saw this they urged on their leader in his mad pranks. The latter now put on the sparring attitude he showed on the ship, and came on to Huwcyn and gave him a flip on the cheek. Huwcyn's equanimity had misled his would-be tormentor, who kept up an amorous attitude towards the frightened Sarah as well.

And then it happened. Huwcyn's well-muscled form stiffened ; his iron-hard fist shot out, and caught his opponent a terrific blow under the jaw. The would-be fighter staggered and fell from the impact of such a piston-like blow. He lay dazed amongst his fellow revellers. This sobered them a bit and they picked up their fallen comrade and hustled him away in a still somewhat dazed condition.

Huw cyn turned to the scared Sarah : "Are you all right, bach?"

"Yes, yes, Hugh," was the agitated reply, and she clung to his arm.

He took her to a tea-shop for a cup of tea, and, as she recovered, she began laughing.

The anxious Huwcyn relaxed and he smiled. "What are you laughing about, Sarah?" he asked.

"Well," she answered, "Nemiah was relating about a reformed prize-fighter who had become a preacher. He had to stand a lot of jeering from the friends of his old life, and one day he found himself in the same railway compartment as them. They began to torment him. After standing a good deal from them he held

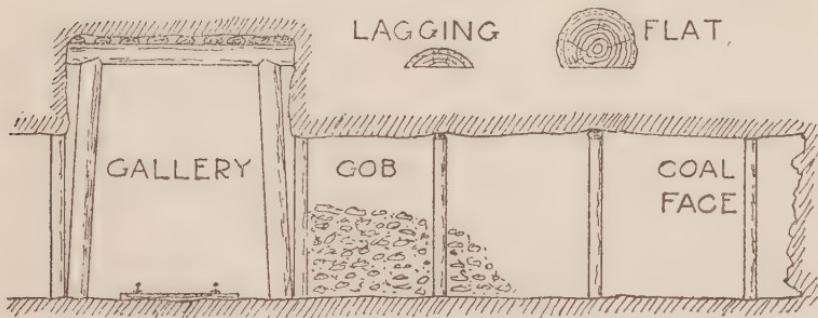
out his two enormous fists and looked at them lovingly. Then he said : ‘ Well, if I’ve given up the old business of prize-fighting, don’t forget, don’t forget—that I still have the tools ! ’ ”

They both laughed now, and Sarah added, “ It was a good job for me, Hugh, that you still carried the tools ! ”

They caught the early boat and in that way avoided further contact with the revellers. On the boat, Sarah snuggled close to Huwcyn because the evening breeze was chilly. Or was it that the civilised female is still inclined to worship the old cave-man element in the male ! At any rate Huwcyn felt that “ his fall from grace ” would not be accounted against him.

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In the Gorlan pit where Nemiah and Huwcyn worked they were participating in the method of removing the entire seam of coal and leaving no coal pillars to support the roof. The galleries



necessary for the transport of coal from the coal faces formed a net-work throughout their district. Such galleries had to accommodate rails, trams and rather large-sized ponies termed “ pitters.” The gallery was cut nine feet high and seven feet wide, and, on the word of command from the haulier, the pony would hunch itself and jump a complete turn in the seven foot width. These galleries were strongly framed by repairers, who did the work at night so as not to interfere with the day-time traffic.

The coal between the galleries was the business of the collier almost entirely, and the height there would depend on the depth of the coal-seam and the working space required. This was called the *Long Wall Method*. The regulations demanded that the top should be supported by posts at distances of not less than six feet apart. So the area under the control of the collier became a draught-board pattern, with *standing posts* at the inter-sections of the six-foot squares. These posts were sunk about six inches into the shale at the bottom and wedged at the top with pieces of *lagging* (strips of wood) about two feet long. In some cases it was necessary to put a beam across the posts. This would be a pit prop with one side sawn to a flat surface so that it made bearing

on the posts. These were called *flats* and the laggings were the waste strips obtained by the process of sawing them. This sawing was carried out in the saw-mill on top of the pit. In some cases the inspecting fireman would require a *cogging* to support the top and would send a cog-man along to do this special work. The cogging would be built of pit-props formed into an interlacing square on plan and could be built to any height.

As the coal was cut, the rubbish in the form of slag and small coal was built into the area of the standing posts and this was called the *gob*. Any *top-ripping* done by the collier and any rubbish after the night-repairers found its way into the gob. That which could not be accommodated in this way was taken out of the pit and went to swell the size of the tip on the hill-side.

§

Jack Evans and Huwcyn had become fast friends and the former had left off using the usual profanity and had become a serious-minded young man. But conversion had not reached his pony Jerry, whose antics made for unreliability. The overman seriously considered taking the pony out of the pit, but he knew that Jack had an affection for him.

Jack had detached the pony from the gun, which connected the iron shafts to the tram, one day, and Jerry in a frolicsome mood dashed down the gallery towards the coal face. Jack dashed after him but with insufficient speed to catch him up.

Huw cyn's butty was not in the pit that day and as Huwcyn lay on his back cutting coal, he heard the commotion of Jerry's approach. He looked through the dim light of his lamp to see Jerry making for the standing posts of his *talcen*. He sprang up, but not before the pony had got in amongst his posts and was executing a hunching up and turning process. The iron shafts came with force against the standing posts as Jack Evans came into the mêlée to grab Jerry's reins. In a flash Huwcyn saw Jack's peril, and with a "Out of the way, you"—flung him clear. The next moment the disturbed top gave way and knocked the pony, Huwcyn and another post to the ground, the post, with a large piece of slag on top of it pinning Huwcyn down by the ankle and face upwards. Huwcyn was amongst the feet of the now squealing horse as well.

Nemiah dashed to the spot to see one end of a flat, which had been supported by the post that pinned Huwcyn in his perilous position, coming slowly down towards the latter's body. He sank to his knees under the end of the descending flat to take its weight. Huwcyn shouted in agonised appeal :

"Get out, Nemiah ! Get out ! The top is coming in ! "

Nemiah took no notice and like Atlas bearing the weight of the world on his shoulders, he stiffened his form to take the load.

Huw cyn was right, and the human form of Nemiah John was no fit support for the squeeze of the mass upon it. He sank

without a groan while the anguished Huwcyn lay impotently between his collapsed form and that of the now quiet pony.

It all happened in a very brief space of time, yet other colliers and Jack Evans rushed there to help.

"Get Nemiah out first" called the sobbing voice of the conscious Huwcyn. An old collier held back his more daring comrades and examined the top with his lamp. Then he nodded, and they fell to in clearing away the debris. They got both men out, but the brave soul of Nemiah John had winged its way out of the dark caverns of the Gorlan pit to a greater light.

§

Now followed one of the most difficult tasks of all, and that was to break the news to the widow. The overman got hold of Derfel and said :

"Derfel, my boy, this is a sad, sad business ; it'll break the heart of Marged John to hear this news. The best to break it to her is Naomi Bowen. As you are a friend of David Bowen, I want you to get out of the pit as soon as possible and ask Naomi Bowen to do this sad duty for us. We're putting them both on stretchers, although from what I can see of it, Huwcyn has only a bruised ankle, a cut on his head and bruises on his body. The bodies of Nemiah and Jerry and the timber saved him from his death.

"Poor fellow ! Poor fellow ! He's sobbing like a child and cannot understand why God allowed a good man like Nemiah to be taken and a chap like him to be left. Well, we can only say 'Thy will be done.' Tell Naomi this."

Derfel did as he was told with a sad heart. The resolute-souled Naomi brushed the tears from her eyes and went to Marged's house. Sarah opened the door with a happy greeting, but the look on Naomi's face sobered her. The latter made a gesture of despair and went into the kitchen where Marged was ironing the week's washing.

After reciprocal greeting Marged looked into Naomi's face. She left her ironing and went to Naomi, and put her arm around her shoulder, saying :

"You've had bad news, Naomi. Is it a telegram ?"

Telegrams were always associated with bad news in the valleys. Naomi shook her head sadly, and she could hardly speak. She said :

"Well, Marged, we must always be ready for bad news, here in Gorlan. The pits claim their toll."

Marged felt her message in a flash. She gasped "Nemiah—is he hurt?"

Naomi put her to sit down in the arm-chair and said :

"Yes, Marged fach, Nemiah is hurt," and added slowly, "badly hurt I fear."

Marged sprang up into Naomi's arms and burst into crying ; between her sobs she said :

" Tell me, Naomi, is Nemiah dead ? "

" Yes, bach, that is the sad news I have to bring you."

Her eyes filled with tears as both Marged and Sarah burst into a torrent of weeping. At last Sarah lifted her head : " What about Hugh, Naomi ? "

" He's hurt, but not badly ; Nemiah gave his life to save him in some terrible fall in the pit."

Sarah went over to Marged, and did all that one weeping woman could do to comfort another.

" These pits," she said, " these awful pits."

Naomi felt that occupation of their hands would help them, so she busied herself to get the house ready to receive the body.

The two boys were down at Rhyd-y-pant and a sad home-coming awaited them that day.

She sent Sarah with a message to her own home and later sent telegrams to the relatives in Pembrokeshire. She allowed time for the inquest and arranged the day and time of the funeral. She stayed with them until night-fall and then returned with the sad details to Thomas Bowen, David and the others.

§

The day of the funeral arrived. The windows were covered with white blinds as was the custom of those days, and the mourners were in black. Two of Nemiah's brothers were there, Marged's parents, and a little old woman who turned out to be Mrs. George, the weaver's widow.

There was to be a brief service for the relatives and friends in the house, and another at the graveside in the cemetery between Gorlan and Rhyd-y-pant.

The sad day arrived and most of the Bowen family, including David, were at the house. Huwcyn, with a badly limping foot insisted on being there, and on going to the cemetery as well. The tears kept coursing down his cheeks. Sarah and her mother, also in tears, tried to comfort the sobbing Marged. It was all very distressing.

The pastor commenced the service :

" Jesus said, I am the Resurrection and the Life ; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

" Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you"

Then the pastor offered up a prayer asking for comfort and solace for the widow, children and the other sorrowing relatives and friends.

After that he gave a brief address, extolling Nemiah's many virtues. He quoted " Greater love hath no man than that he

should lay down his life for his friend." Huwcyn sobbed unashamedly at this.

Then he gave out a hymn so well-known to Welsh people—

Bydd myrdd o ryfeddodau

and the little congregation repeated the last four lines :

" There shall be myriad wonders
 Upon the break of day,
 When souls of tribulation
 Shall rise in freed array !
 All in their heav'ly garments,
 Transfigured, glad and brave,
 Like to their Lord arising
 Victorious from the grave."

There was a large crowd outside, for Nemiah had won great respect in Gorlan. He had been regarded as the next check-weigher because he could handle the collier's cases before the owners with skill, and would have seen deaconship at Bethel in the next election. The Pastor made for the head of the procession, to be followed by the undertaker who would walk beside him. They all walked in twos.

The coffin was covered with flowers, and was followed by the mourners. Marged and Sarah were followed by the two tearful boys ; then came Nemiah's brothers and Marged's parents. Huwcyn, pairing off with the sorrowful Jack Evans, came after, while Thomas and David Peter Bowen followed. The weaver's widow, now in her seventies, stayed behind in the house.

Hearses were practically unknown in Gorlan in those days, and the coffin, carried by willing and respectful bearers, was far more impressive. At so many paces, the undertaker told the first four behind him to fall out and change with those then carrying the coffin. With a long procession there might be two or three lots of bearers waiting their turn to carry the bier, and so it was at Nemiah's funeral. The relieved bearers would then join the tail of the procession which was before the coffin.

Meanwhile, hymns were sung as the procession slowly and sadly wended its way to the burial ground.

There were two small chapels at the cemetery and one of these was generally used for a service there. Knowing Nemiah's views on this point, Marged had decided not to follow this procedure. The procession went straight to the open grave, and the coffin was lowered into it.

Then followed a short service :

" *In the midst of life, we are in death*

" *Of whom may we seek for succour, but of Thee, O Lord.*

" *We have brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out.*

" *The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord*"

Then came the prayer, followed by the well-known hymn—an old man's lamentation—

- Mae 'nghyfeillion adre'n myned—*
- “ All my friends are homeward going,
 All before me, one by one,
 And they leave me in my sadness
 Waiting 'til my day is done.
- “ After travels long together,
 Through this world of travail's trend,
 They have left me, lone, forgotten,
 Just upon my journey's end.
- “ They have fled beyond all trials,
 And the sorrows of this world;
 They to-day are garbed in splendour,
 With their banners all unfurled.
- “ Often-times I take to musing,
 And to dream I see them there,
 And I seem to hear them singing
 Songs of praises, sweet and rare.
- “ But my time is fast approaching
 When I join them evermore
 In a great and glorious choral
 To be parted nevermore.”

The graveside ceremony and the closing hymn was a great trial for the chief mourners,—even harrowing in its effects, and in due course the funerals often became for men only.

After the last tribute had been paid, the people made their way home. Those from distances returned to the house of the deceased and were given a good meal before going on their way. Naomi Bowen saw to this after the funeral left the house.

Those from Pembrokeshire were readily accommodated with kindly neighbours so that they could return the following day or later.

Yes, that was the fate of many who went down the pits to hew that coal which was so necessary in those days to turn the wheels of the world.

When David was a small boy, the cry would go up, “ Stretcher ! Stretcher ! ” and they would run to see. If the stretcher was carried on the shoulders of the four bearers, it was the sign of an accident. If carried low it was the sign of death.

The accidents occurred chiefly by the roof of the headings coming down unexpectedly ; but other causes, such as runaway journeys of trams, brought about by a broken rope or a broken shackle, took their toll of accidents as well.

It was the evening of the funeral in May, 1905, that the family gathered together in Marged's house. All had gone, even Naomi Bowen, and Marged sat in Nemiah's armchair by the fire. Sarah rightly surmised that she did not like to see anyone else sitting in it on that day. She was now composed and was bravely looking into the future. She went over the alternatives of earning a living, as many widows did in Gorlan.

She could keep lodgers, but the thought of any other man there jarred on her susceptibilities. She could clean a school, but this would mean neglecting the boys at breakfast time and also during the evening. In any case the pay was very low. She could take to sewing, for Sarah said that she would make a good dressmaker. That sounded feasible. She could open a little shop and sell sweets and groceries. The drawback to that was debts, and she felt that it was beyond her to be hard on her debtors ; there was the danger of strikes as well. She sighed and the others looked at her with compassion.

Her two boys, her parents, Sarah, Huwcyn and the weaver's widow, Mrs. George, was there. Her father surmised what was in her thoughts and, as he had to return the following day, he said, gently : " Well, Marged, this is a sad day for you. What are your plans for the future ? "

Marged sighed again, and the elder boy went to his mother's side and put his arm around her neck. She kissed his hand and held him to her. The boy replied proudly :

" I am going to help mother to keep the home together. She shan't go out to work or keep lodgers. I'm going to work."

" Not in the pit ! Not in the pit, Brynmor," said his mother with some pain.

" There's better money for boys in the pit than anywhere else, Mam. But if you don't like it, I could go to work in the foundry like David Peter Bowen did."

The grandfather interposed, smiling to himself at the intonation of the valleys which the boys had picked up :

" Do you like it in school at Rhyd-y-pant, Brynmor ? "

" Oh, yes," was the ready answer. " Mr. Prothero is our form master this year and we all like him very much. He sticks up for Gorlan boys, too. He said in class the other day that the best boy he had ever taught was a Gorlan boy, and that was David Peter Bowen."

There was an air of pride in the boy as he said this for he felt that David was not only Gorlan but Pembrokeshire as well. Marged smiled a little and said :

" David was always a favourite with Mr. Prothero, ever since they were both in the Gorlan Boys School."

The boy went on :

" Old Pip-pip, that is what we call him, said that David should never have left school but should have gone to the best college in the country."

This seemed to wake Marged's mind, for she said vehemently :

"And you shan't leave school, either. It was your father's wish that you should go to college as David's elder brother has gone. We saved some money with that in mind. No! No! You shall *not* leave school, Brynmor. We'll manage somehow."

"That's true, Brynmor," added the grandfather. "We'll manage somehow to give you both a good education if it was your father's wish and for the sake of his memory as well."

Huwbyn interposed :

"Sarah and I have discussed this matter and as Nemiah lost his life in saving mine . . ." Here the tears came to his eyes and his emotion choked his utterance. Sarah continued for him :

"Hugh is earning good money. The doctor says that his ankle won't take long to heal and he'll be back at work soon. I don't like the idea of him working in the coal-face, but that is where the best money is earned. I want him to become a fireman, but he wants to earn as much money as he can in order to help you, Marged. In that I think he's quite right. You and Nemiah have always helped me; now it's the turn of Hugh and myself."

Marged shook her head, and it is remarkable how those who help others are generally the least likely to accept help themselves. She said :

"No, Sarah; you and Hugh are getting married in the autumn and you'll have to face your own family responsibilities. It's very good of you both, but we must look at the practical side of things."

"Quite right, *fy merch i*," chimed in Mrs. George, and much to the surprise of the others went on : "Now look here, I've a plan which I've discussed with that shrewd woman, Naomi Bowen, while you were all at the funeral. That's what I call a sensible, far-seeing woman and she has helped me in my plan. It's this : I'm an old woman who lives a lonely life on my own in Abergwaun. I've a nice house with good furniture, and thanks partly to Nemiah, I've a decent income. I looked upon Nemiah as a son—a good son, mark you—and after he helped me to get the factory let and helped me with other affairs I made my will and left everything I have to him. He knew nothing of this.

"Well, now then, I can see myself getting pleasure out of what I have while I live my last few years. There is a good County School in Abergwaun for the past ten years. As the headmaster lives near me I went to see him before coming up here. There are scholarships for boys entering the school, and your two boys could sit the examinations next month. Then they could go into the school next September."

The old lady was getting quite warm and enthusiastic over her plan. The others looked at her with wonder and let her go on :

"Now, Marged, you sell this furniture, and come down and live with me. I'll get my house and furniture put in our joint names as Naomi Bowen suggested ; and I will make a new will,

leaving to you what I left to Nemiah. Naomi said that you'll have compensation from the pits, so between what you've got and what I've got, we will manage all right. What do you say to that?"

There were murmurs of approval from all, and Marged was overcome with the old woman's kindness. Sarah went over and kissed the old lady. Marged did the same, and confessed that although she had been very happy in Gorlan, she would now be glad to get away from the place that had brought such a tragedy into her life. The boys were glad. Abergwaun was a place of holiday and fresh adventure. There was the sea there, ships, boats, bathing—well it was all right.

Sarah then said : " Well, it so happens that after Hugh and I get married and get the things together that make a home, we too shall leave Gorlan. I feel, and Hugh agrees, that we'd better get away into another place as Naomi Bowen did when she came here, and make a good start. It'll give Hugh a new background, and " (with a smile towards Huwcyn) " he might even become an overman and a deacon."

" We shall probably go down Pont Enfys way and in that case we shan't be far from Cardiff."

She turned brightly to the two boys and continued : " And if you two boys get to the University College at Cardiff, as your father wanted you to do, you can always come to stay with your Aunt Sarah at Pont Enfys."

There was a subdued happy laugh at this ; and there we must leave them with the sunshine overcoming the shadow.

CHAPTER XXXII

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

ON Saturday, December 16th, 1905, David and Derfel went to Cardiff to see the great Rugby football match between the teams of New Zealand and Wales. They were very happy as they walked down Queen Street. On the way, their eyes were arrested by a figure in a Norfolk suit and there was no mistaking that springy gait. It was Phil Prothero and they gladly greeted him. More than four years had passed since they saw him before and the pleasure of renewed contact was mutual.

"My word," was Prothero's comment, "how you two boys have grown since I had you at Rhyd-y-pant. You, David, look as though you're going to be a six-footer."

"I've certainly shot up since I left the fumes of the foundry for open-air work," replied David.

As they went along the left side of Queen Street, trying to talk in a jostling crowd, Prothero stopped at a coffee shop and took them in. Over coffee and buns, he found out all about their careers and gave them some encouragement for the future. He stressed the need of more education on both.

He insisted on paying for the coffee and buns, and then they re-entered the street. They made their way with the drifting crowd to see the football event of the year, or of all time, as the old staggers said before the day was out.

§

The New Zealand Rugby Football Team had swept through this country that year, winning victory after victory and not knowing a single defeat. They were a wonderful team. When they left New Zealand, one of their leading statesmen, in seeing them off, told them to beware of Wales. Well, New Zealand was to meet Wales that day in Cardiff at half-past two. It was a momentous occasion.

These New Zealanders came from a tough emigrant stock and from a small population. The Welshmen came from a small country (the smallest of the United Kingdom) as well, and from the industrial population of a district that spread from East Carmarthenshire, across Glamorganshire and West Monmouthshire to Newport. This population, too, was mostly immigrant as we have pointed out earlier.

The size of the respective populations from which the teams were drawn were quite comparable. It was in the neighbourhood of one and a half million people. That each of the two superb teams were drawn from so small a number is contrary to what can be expected ; for as a rule, the greater the population the greater

the probability of exceptionally good men (the same applies to bad men as well). But small countries have shown in history that there is some element that overrides this rule of statistics.

The industrial area of Wales referred to had drawn from the most virile populations of its surrounding counties, and the standard of effort was very high. The standard of courage was high as well, as we have indicated in the characters described. And they all made a people—a remarkable people. The story of this people of industrial South Wales would not be complete without the inclusion of the account of the titanic struggle waged in Cardiff in December, 1905.

Phil Prothero and the boys got into the Cardiff Arms Park about 12 noon, although the match would not start for another two and a half hours. They all carried lunches in their pockets.

Their tutor was well versed in football lore. He told them how Wales had won the triple crown for the last season by beating England, Scotland and Ireland during that season. Ireland was then the "runner-up," and Wales beat them by 10 points against 3 points. From 1882 to 1905, Wales in playing against Ireland had won twelve matches against Ireland's seven, and there was one drawn game. During the previous season, Wales had beaten England by twenty-five points to nil. Between 1884 and 1905 Scotland and Wales had won the triple crown thrice, while England and Ireland had won it twice. Wales won it for the first time in 1893.

§

The crowd was getting bigger and bigger, and by 12.30 the ground, which could hold 45,000 to 50,000 appeared to be packed. The waiting masses were in good humour and the usual South Wales repartee was flying around. There were two wags near our trio who were bantering those around them and each other. One of them said :

"It is a good job for this New Zealand team that they're not meeting our Maesteg team to-day. You'd see all of them being taken off the field on stretchers."

The crowd laughed at the thought of the all-conquering New Zealanders being played against the local Maesteg team. That was the joke of it. The other wag said :

"And if your Maesteg team, mun, were to play against our Dowlais team, they'd be nothing but sausage meat!"

"Oh, you come from Dowlais Top, do you?" rejoined the other. "One of Peter Price's boys, are you?" (Peter Price was a pastor who had criticised Evan Roberts when the Revival was at its height about a year previously).

"Yes, my lad, Dowlais, and proud of it!"

"Let me see now, there's a story going around about a young fellow in Dowlais; perhaps it was you, see?"

Curiosity was now aroused, and several shouted "Come on, let's have that story."

"All right then, but I don't want to hurt the feelings of that Dowlais chap, see. So I will tone it down a bit, see. Well, here goes :

"As you know, the chapels had something to do when taking in all the young fellahs who went into them during the Revival ; so the Rev. Peter Price gave them an evening a week, see, to teach them the Old Testament stories. Ignorant of the scriptures, they were, see. One week he took the story of how a fella' named Jonah was swallowed by a whale, see, and came out alive in three days time. Of course," (with a waggish nod towards the Dowlais man), "them Dowlais chaps know nothing about fish, because they're so far from the sea. All they know is about herrings, bloaters and kippers which they buy in the shops, see.

"But the next week, Peter Price went on to tell them about three young fellahs going into a fiery furnace and coming out alive, see. Well, when them Dowlais chaps heard the word furnace, they all cocked up their ears because they all worked in the steel furnaces, see.

"So up got one young fella' on the gallery, and said to Peter Price : 'Excuse me, Mr. Price, did you say that the furnace these three chaps came out of was hotter than our furnaces here in Dowlais ?'

"'Yes,' says Peter Price, 'and seven times hotter than that,' see.

"So this young fella,' being a Dowlais man, gets his hair off at that. 'What,' he shouts, 'seven times hotter than our furnaces here in Dowlais !' and he turns to one of his pals and says : 'O jawch ! Shoni, reach me my cap,' then he turns back to Peter Price and points to him and says : 'and before I go, Mr. Price, I might as well tell you that I don't believe a word about that blinkin' bloater, either.'

A roar of laughter went up when the climax came, in which the Dowlais man joined heartily. It was a good story, and whether it was true or just made up in the South Wales way this did not matter a jot to the appreciative listeners.

The crowd was good-natured and sang the popular songs of the day. One of them was "Just like the ivy, I'll cling to you." Another was "Sospan Fach," beloved of South Wilians. The band was playing and gave some relief to the tediousness of waiting.

David saw the old internationals from all four countries getting into their own enclosures, and the band played "The Boys of the Old Brigade." Phil Prothero named them to the boys as they appeared. They were recognised and cheered by the crowd. One ascetic-looking individual coolly got into this enclosure only to be turned out by the police. Someone from the crowd shouted to the policeman ironically :

"Don't turn the pore fella' out. He must have been playing

in the International Skeletons Match!" The crowd roared at this sally.

The grandstand began to fill at 1.30 p.m. and many notables were recognised by Prothero, who again pointed them out to David and Derfel. The boys were eating their sandwiches by this time.

The weather was glorious for that time of the year, and it suited both of the opposing teams. The band went on playing Welsh airs—"Men of Harlech," "Merch Megan," "The Land of My Fathers," "Lead Kindly Light," "Blue Bell," and some favourite Welsh hymn tunes.

The inevitable small dog romped across the pitch, and the Cardiff Fire Brigade galloped across the field to take up a position of readiness.

§

The time was rolling on and the great crowd began swaying and heaving as they watched for the entry of the players. The air became electric and the suspense was terrific. All eyes were upon the lower end of the pavilion and at 2.30 p.m. David saw the New Zealanders appear. A roar of welcome and good cheer went up from the crowd while the band greeted the visitors with the *Men of Harlech*.

They were called the "All Blacks" because everything they wore was black. This was only relieved by their white skins at faces, hands and exposed knees, while each wore a silver fern on the left side of the breast. Each man also wore a white ticket with his respective number in black.

Then the Welsh team, led by their captain, Gwyn Nicholls, appeared. They wore scarlet jerseys with the Prince of Wales' feathers sewn on them. A great shout of welcome went up, accompanied by such cries as "Play up, Wales," "Good old Nicholls," "Drop a goal, Bush," etc. The team playing for Wales was as follows :

Back : H. B. Winfield, Cardiff.

Three-quarter backs : E. Gwyn Nicholls, Cardiff (*Captain*) ; R. T. Gabe, Cardiff ; W. Llewellyn, Penygraig ; E. T. Morgan, London Welsh.

Extra back : C. Pritchard, Pontypool.

Half backs : R. M. Owen, Swansea ; Percy Bush, Cardiff.

Forwards : W. Joseph, Swansea ; C. M. Pritchard, Newport ; A. F. Harding, London Welsh ; J. F. Williams, London Welsh ; G. Travers, Pill Harriers ; J. J. Hodges, Newport ; D. Jones, Aberdare.

The Welsh Pack looked of smaller build than their opponents. Dicky Owen of Swansea was only five foot three inches high, but he was much shorter than the others. The average heights were New Zealand, five foot eleven inches ; Wales five foot nine-and-

a-half inches, but the All Blacks were burlier in build as well. They all stood on the field as two fine packs.

Then amidst a silence that could almost be felt the All Blacks stood in the centre of the field and sang their Maori war-song. Without understanding a word of it, the crowd felt its weird effect. One of the translations given afterwards was as follows :

"Leader : It is death ! It is death !

Chorus : It is life ! It is life !

*This is the strong one, the man of the brawny tribe,
Who comes to us to cause the sun to shine.*

Hurrah ! Hurrah !

Then Teddy Morgan led the Welsh team in singing the Welsh National Anthem—*The Land of My Fathers*, in Welsh. The huge crowd joined in the chorus and the effect was electrifying. Gallagher, the giant captain of the All Blacks, said afterwards that it was the most thrilling experience of his life. The Welsh crowd sang with an effect that gripped all the visitors in a kind of thrall. What music, what unison, what fervour !

Then they all took up their places. The referee was Mr. Jack Dallas of Scotland.

The All Blacks were unbeaten in this country, but Wales had won the triple crown in the previous season and were unbeaten in that season as yet. Phil Prothero said that the Welsh team would have to depend on skill and staying powers against their heavier opponents who had beaten twenty-seven of the best teams this country could put forward. They had, so far, scored 801 points to 22, a formidable record.

The first quarter of an hour passed without New Zealand having asserted any superiority. Wales played with vigour and were better in attack than their opponents. Gallagher was no match for Owen. The latter sent a quick pass to Bush who tried a shot for goal but failed.

One of the biggest opposing forwards charged Owen with vigour, but the indignation of the crowd did not last long for they saw "The Little Wonder," as he was called, not only uninjured, but laughing. The Welsh pack played heroically against their hefty opponents and at quarter time there was no score. After twenty-five minutes play Wales lost a grand chance to score only three yards away from the line. The crowd groaned at this. A minute later there was exciting play inside the New Zealand twenty-five ; and the Welsh attacks on the left and right wings were skilfully repelled.

The play was midway between the New Zealand half and quarter line when Owen whipped away the ball with startling speed, even for him, for he had no equal as an inside half. He cleverly feinted to pass to Bush and then threw to Pritchard, who deceived the opposing back by swerving towards the left wing. He then passed to Gabe, who, with another feint inwards, passed to Morgan,

who made a great run, beating McGregor, the flying Scotsman easily, and, with another quick swerve that left Gillett the full back gaping, scored a try for Wales.

The crowd went frantic with joy, and the cheering of that vast crowd was tremendous. David and Derfel were at fever heat through watching every move of the game and they joined in the cheering. Phil Prothero was delighted and turning to them said :

" Well, that's the first time the New Zealanders have had a score against them before they scored themselves. Good play ! Good play ! "

The attempt to convert into a goal failed, and the game was resumed at a furious pace. Between the score and half-time Pritchard (Pontypool) was injured, while Owen was so badly mauled that the referee had to say a few words to the visitors. It was a couple of minutes before he resumed play, and he was then in much pain. The New Zealanders tried their circular type of passing, but the speed of the Welsh pack made this quite ineffective.

So half-time arrived. During the interval, Phil Prothero rolled himself a cigarette and was rather thoughtful. David smiled as he remembered how it was his job one time to buy that Three Castles tobacco at five-pence-ha'penny an ounce. He was allowed to keep the change from a sixpence !

Derfel asked their old teacher :

" What do you think of our chances, now, Mr. Prothero ? "

" Well," he said, " ours is the better team ; but whether they can stay the pace is doubtful. There is Pritchard hurt and Dicky Owen had a pretty bad time in that last rough-and-tumble."

He was right, for as they found afterwards, Owen was in great pain. A doctor bandaged his chest, for a cartilage of the breast was displaced. He confessed after the game was over that he was in agony and would have left the field had it been any other match but this.

The crowd sang *The Land of My Fathers* to cheer up their team and this with the hope that the spirit of heroism would prevail.

The game restarted again at a terrific pace. There was a lot of kicking in the restart. Little Owen again tackled his opposing giants with audacious gallantry and was frantically cheered by the crowd in consequence.

The New Zealanders were now on their mettle. Perhaps they remembered what their statesman told them as they left their home country. They tried their utmost to score and tried many devices, but the Welsh pack put up a wonderful defence, and stood up to rough usage without wavering. The New Zealand team used their superior weight without quarter against the smaller-sized Welsh backs. They tried kicking and quick following up but the Welsh catching was accurate, while Bush fielded and screw-punted in a way that drew delirious cheers from the old staggers in the crowd.

The attack veered to the Welsh side and they tried to get past

the New Zealand defence, but Gillett was in good form and repelled in fine style. At this juncture the referee had to speak to one of the New Zealand forwards for the rough tackling of Owen, who must have been exasperating to his large opponents.

The visiting team tried time and again to score, but the Welsh defence was always sound. Dean, a New Zealand player made one thrilling attempt to save the game and claimed to have crossed with a corner try, but the referee's ruling was against it.

At 3.54 the game finished with the score as follows :

	G.	T.	P.
Wales	0	1	3
New Zealand	0	0	0

Wales had won a fight for what a New Zealand player described as the *World Championship*.

The scene that followed was indescribable. The delirious Welsh crowd rushed on the field and surrounded the Welsh players. Bush and others were carried shoulder high and but for the density of the crowd, all the team would have been treated in the same way.

An expert criticism states that in the history of Welsh Rugby Football, there had been occasions when individual players might have shown greater merit than the individual players of that day's game, but never had there been a Welsh side which from forward to full back showed such uniform excellence as that of the team that beat the New Zealanders in 1905. Every man played with a grim determination from beginning to end.

There was a pleasing meeting of captains over a cup of tea when the match was over. Gallagher shook Gwyn Nicholls heartily by the hand and said with sincerity that the better team had won. They exchanged jerseys and wore each other's like brothers. Gallagher said that his team knew that their game with Wales would be the hardest of the tour. Later he said, "Yes, we have met our Waterloo!"

EPILOGUE

We must bring the story of the immigrant people of the mining valleys of Glamorganshire to an end. They were brave, industrious and kindly people who had fused together the good qualities of many shires.

Family life was at a very high level. Rearing and caring greatly for their families, the women faced the full standards of their period heroically. Day in, day out, from early morning to late evening, Sundays and all, they carried out their household duties with unfailing zeal. They were also the chancellors of the family exchequers. They took care to balance their budgets, whatever personal or family sacrifice this might mean. They made their little terraced houses into real homes and the bright-burning fires on their hearths were symbolical of their own souls. And what mothers they were! They produced a generation of children who proved worthy of them. They gave mightily in their generation and in their descendants we still reap what was sown by them. That, possibly, was the greatest of their achievements.

Their menfolk stood by them loyally, and conscious of their effort, generally handed over to their care the whole of their wages. Those hard-earned wages! With almost unfailing regularity, the men went down the pits to work long hours in stuffy and coal-dust-laden atmospheres. They went to their dangerous occupations as men who felt that their destinies were largely outside their control. The coal they cut so industriously poured in long strings of coal trucks to the ports of the Bristol Channel. From there, the industry of their hands was taken for world-wide use. That was how the material product of their labours served the many uses of their period. To do it, they faced the daily dangers of many forms of accidents. This they did with quiet and stolid resolution and though each, in his career, faced a thousand deaths, he died but once. Daily the pits swallowed them and they went with the hymns of their Bethels in their hearts and the ready jest upon their lips. It is difficult to think of them without remembering that quick humour which was distinctly their own.

If, for our purpose, we regard Naomi Bowen, Nemiah John, Mari Jones and Job Morgan as a first generation, then David Peter Bowen and Derfel Pugh are the second. And what of them? We are parting from them while they are seventeen years of age and yet we are able to look back over forty years to that period.

That second generation proved worthy of their ancestry. With the courage, industry and charity that had been taught them, many of them reached high positions; in turn, they served their period truly and well although scattered to many places. They, too, produced the third generation and still guided by the inspiration of the first, the third generation went still further, and some won through to most distinguished positions.

Before we end this book, we will look at the records of the men of that second generation before we part with them. From an educational point of view they can be divided into classes. The first stayed on at school and entered the universities. The second left school, but re-entered later and passed on to the universities. The products of both of these classes were generally teachers and preachers. The third class left school, but through poverty of family conditions or other reasons failed to have the opportunities of the first and second classes. David and Derfel in this story are examples. With resurgent ambition allied to their native courage and industry they had to be satisfied with a casual form of education to help them. Occasionally they might reach a university. Young mine-workers were known to follow their employment, study at night, sit for their matriculation examination successfully and then obtain a university education. Others sought the aid of evening technical schools or correspondence courses and through dint of ability and sheer perseverance won distinction. It was surprising to what channels the ambitions of the young miners led them. One, leaving the pits at the age of twenty years, took a nautical course and within ten years captained a merchant vessel ; later, he captained one of the largest passenger liners afloat and eventually retired with a very fine record as sea captain.

We cannot at this juncture follow the careers of David Peter Bowen and Derfel Pugh. The story of each would require a book in itself, and it is hoped that they will compile such records. Sufficient for the present is to state that both had interesting and useful careers.

This, however, is a story of a people and with the scene of fifteen of them wearing scarlet jerseys and winning world championship in December, 1905, the story is ended. It is a fitting climax.

And yet, is it ?

Some years later, in 1914, the young men of the mining valleys poured into Cardiff to take part in another international fight. They knew what danger meant, but the recruiting of Glamorganshire constituted a record. There was even national danger in this response, for Welsh coal was essential to the British Navy.

Yes, the men of that second generation went to fight in defence of the land that bore them. They went with that ready jest on their lips and the unmistakeable intonation of South Wales in their voices. Yet deep in their hearts were the hymns of their Welsh Bethels and in their *hirael* for their homes and beloved valleys, these would well forth in that songed solace which spoke of the heritage of their native Wales.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ASSISTANCE :

The Author wishes to acknowledge the help given him by the several friends who have criticised the M.S.S. and printer's proofs as well as those who have assisted him with information. Thanks are also due to the Librarians and Staffs of the Cardiff Free Library and the Library of the University College at Bangor for the help given in searching for the records referred to in this book.

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B. PRICE DAVIES

Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors ; Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects ; Fellow of the Royal Sanitary Institute ; Member of the Town Planning Institute ; Member of the Institution of Municipal Engineers ; First Class Honoursman in Quantity Surveying, City of Guilds of London Institute.

Richard Pickering Prize Winner (with Gold Medal) of the Institution of Municipal Engineers for 1925. Competition Set Subject : "Economics of Housing."

Three times First Prize Winner and Gold Medallist of the Open and Biennial Competitions of the Public Works, Roads and Transport Congress. Subjects : 1929, Town Planning ; 1933, Building Specifications and Construction ; 1937, Planning of Houses.

Also Special Prize Winner of the Congress Competitions of 1929 for a paper on Roads and Bridges, and of 1937 for a paper on Architectural Design.

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